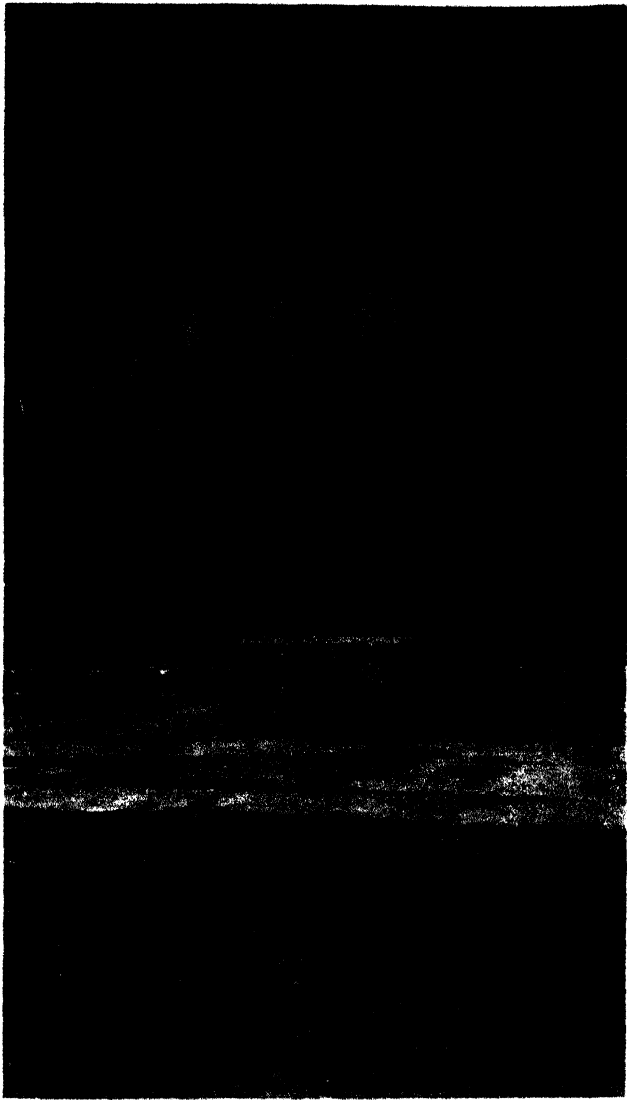


THE GLAMOUR OF EGYPT



Hawk headed God. Temple of Horus, Edfu

THE GLAMOUR OF EGYPT

BY

B. M. W. JESSON

Author of "Twenty-four Strokes of the Pen"

With sixteen full-page illustrations

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Dedicated to Mrs. G. A. Reisner,
Harvard Camp,
Pyramids

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PROLOGUE

IN the hush when night is slipping away, the Sphinx, a grey shadow, gazes towards the white Mokattam hills, heedless of gay Cairo asleep beside the river, unmindful of the quiet dead who lie around.

The desert, waveless and soundless, lies behind, where silent men, leading soft-footed camels, stand and gaze towards the East.

A faint, pale streak heralds the coming day. The red of dawn casts rosy shadows over the mist rising from the green fields to the yellow sands on which the Spirit of Egypt waits.

A mysterious glimmer spreads abroad. Young light has conquered. The Sphinx is golden red in the smile of Harmachis the Dawn. "Immortal Age is in the presence of Immortal Youth."

THE PYRAMIDS AND TOMBS OF GIZEH

My Dears,

One bright morning in early February there was a feeling of light-heartedness and gaiety in the air as we watched a party of cinema artists set out on camels from the flight of steps leading up to Menâ House. Clad in bare-backed bathing-dresses of orange and green, with golf clubs slung in bags over their shoulders, two girls of the party, one red-haired and one black, mounted their camels and slowly rode off, led by long-robed camel-boys while camera-men ticked off their progress.

Above them in the sunlight soared the gigantic pyramid of Cheops, who nearly five thousand years ago had married two princesses, one red-haired and one black, and that very day after seeing "the Camel Corps" proceed we stood in the tomb of Meresankh, the dearly loved daughter of the red-haired child of Cheops, who had been named by him after his great mother, Hetepheres. The relationships of this family are frightfully muddling, for there seems to have been a great scarcity of

names. There were three Hetepheres and three Meresankh, or Mary Ann as I call the one we are writing about, because it helps me to remember that she was once a girl, a woman, a mother and, as her name tells us, "one who loved life"—but the hieroglyphics on one side of her rock-hewn tomb tell the learned that she was a king's daughter and that her Ka was at rest, while on the other it says that after many days she proceeded to her beautiful tomb, which seems to suggest that she died more or less unexpectedly, and, it is thought, when she was only about fifty years old. Whereas Hetepheres long outlived her. Her mother had her tomb hewn, and decorated with gay coloured figures covering the white plaster on the walls and square-cut pillars. It was a strange feeling to go into this room or chapel supported by columns, and to see behind them a row of ten figures, waiting there as if for the touch of the magician's wand to make them move and speak. I was interested, for "Mary Ann's" mother stands on the outside of the row as if she were the presiding mother goddess caring for a favourite daughter and her numerous family. Hetepheres is shown as having red-golden hair, and "Mary Ann" in one of the paintings is dressed in a white dress with blue beads over it, and in another with a leopard skin, but she is always represented as having black hair.

I tried to picture "Mary Ann" as a little girl listening while her mother, Hetepheres, told her of

her grandfather's love for his mother, after whom she had been named. No doubt she told her of a visit which the great queen paid to her son's court. How she had been carried through the streets in a gold-and-ebony chair with golden trappings, and her name inscribed on it in gold hieroglyphics. She was seated on a cushion with her arms resting on the arms of the chair, for she was small and slender, "not like me," her mother would say—"and very beautiful. She was always well dressed," she would tell her.

"Her slaves had a great time preparing her for a festival procession. Shadows beneath her eyes must be darkened. She herself and her robes be perfumed and anointed with the traditional scents used by the Egyptian great ladies. She must be manicured so that in all points she might be shown as a daughter of the sun-god Ra, and yet she was a very lovable woman, for when she died my grandfather had a tomb built for her near his great pyramid at Dashur, and buried with her was a fine bedstead of gold with its hangings, which he had given her, the silver anklets inlaid with dragonflies in turquoise, lapis lazuli and red cornelian, and golden drinking-cups, and endless other things. Her mummy itself was laid inside a beautiful alabaster coffin.

"And then one day," Hetepheres would continue, "the Vizier and some other of the courtiers came to the Pharaoh, my father, and bending low,

and shrinking from his face, told him that the guardian of the tombs at Dashur reported that robbers had broken into the Queen's tomb and had stolen many of the treasures. Pharaoh's face grew dark and he gave orders that the sarcophagus and such treasures as remained should be brought *here* and buried within the Sacred City of the Dead. The burial pit was dug, the treasures buried and the sarcophagus was put into a place of safety, where they remain unto this day."

So much for Hetepheres' story. I am going on with it, as told me by Mrs. Reisner, who kindly took me into the tomb of Meresankh, and also showed me the pit where the American excavators had found the coffin, the bedstead, and everything which had been brought from Dashur, untouched. Now comes the climax to Hetepheres' story.

Although Cheops had thought his mother's mummy was within the sarcophagus, and had ordered an ox to be slaughtered, probably as a special sacrifice for the Ka of his mother, and two jars of beer to be placed within the burial shaft, his courtiers had deceived him and the Queen's mummy was not within the beautiful coffin, which was empty when it was brought to Gizeh—empty, as when opened by Dr. Reisner, who suggests that the robbers five thousand years ago had wrenched the sarcophagus open, dragged the royal mummy out of it, unwrapped it hurriedly, seized all the jewels they could, and then had broken it up and cast it

to the dogs and jackals, in the hope that destruction having befallen the body no vengeance would be possible, as the royal spirit would have no place of entry.

I have told you about two tombs, one that of the grand-daughter of the mighty Cheops, the other of his mother. Now, for a moment or two, let me tell you a fairy story about the Great Pyramid, as it was told to me, the gullible, by a guide—and a fascinating story he made of it—and then perforce I must tell you the prosaic and sober facts as told to me by Dr. Reisner.

Come inside the Great Pyramid of Cheops with me. It is not as terrifying an experience as it was, neither is the progress as hard and difficult as it was nine years ago, when all unknowing we trusted ourselves to five guides, one of whom, the English spokesman, walked in front, then one pulled and another pushed each of us up a black, slippery incline lighted only by a torch, held by the leader, or by a magnesium wire, lighted but always going out. Breathless and haunted we reached the central tomb chamber, where the great red granite sarcophagus of Cheops stands to-day, wherein we were told he never rested, after having caused misery and death to millions of slaves during thirty long years. That adventure will always remain rather an alarming memory, but even then we were glad we did it, especially as my fortune was "truly told me" by one of our black brethren,

and a romance was prophesied to take place within the year, but which to-day, nine years later, has not materialised.

This year we had but one guide, who led the way up a wooden incline with slats across it to make a sort of ladder. The darkness, this time, was lighted by electricity, and the tomb chamber of the King had four lights at each corner to illuminate the roof, made of five great slabs of black granite, at which the empty sarcophagus gazed up.

Then we came down, and as before, bending nearly double, went into the chamber beneath, where the Queen once stood in mummified form, her back turned to treasures which were piled up behind her, her eyes gazing down upon the furniture and offerings brought there, which would enable her spirit to return as long as the body lasted.

On a lower level, our guide told us, in a room hewn out of the living rock over which the casing of the pyramid descended, was buried the King's high priest, so that he might continually pray for the well-being of his lord. Also, he said, that when the excavators were puzzled as to the real entrance of the tomb, some century or so ago, the chief one stood in silence under the stars and the spirits whispered to him. Personally, I thought that was rather curious, for I should have thought "the spirits," as he called them, would be the last to wish to give away a secret which had remained unguessed for

THE PYRAMIDS AND TOMBS OF GIZEH

many, many centuries, but these guides about the pyramids seem to have a veritable belief in the spirit world surrounding them. They have also an uncanny fear of black animals. I couldn't help wondering if the belief in Set of the Underworld unconsciously existed to-day, and if in the stillness of the starlit night these men did see and hear things beyond the ken of the ordinary visitor and tourist.

And now come down with a bump to reality. The three burial chambers are sober fact, but they were each built as the burial chamber for the man King Cheops. Twice before the Great Pyramid rose into the clear sky as it is to-day, Cheops altered his plan ; first, when he was not the mighty man he ended in being, he had hewn a chamber into the rock, down into which the sarcophagus would have to slide, but it was found to be impracticable, so he enlarged his plan, and raised the pyramid above a limestone chamber, which as I told you the guides described as the Queen's chamber. But Pharaoh was not satisfied, his wealth and power had increased greatly, so in his magnificence he gave orders for a still broader and higher pyramid to be built, and within it a massive granite chamber to house his mummified remains. At one period of time he verily did lie within these strong-built walls, but thieves broke in upon his rest, and he suffered the same fate from which he had hoped to spare his mother.

Yours, —

II

EXTRACT FROM MY DIARY OF FEBRUARY 1934

SOME people think a museum is just the dullest of dull places, but they would not think so had they seen the great museum at Cairo as I did one day, for as I went in I saw with the eye of the spirit a little lady of long ago, every inch a queen, a tall handsome man whom all would say was born to rule, another in the dress of a chieftain of some tribe. Beyond them, stood in a group, a kingly dreamer with his beautiful wife and several children, a youth who scarcely seemed awake, and one who slid from the saddle of a richly caparisoned horse. I felt that they were waiting, waiting for someone to come who really cared to learn their history, who would look with interest and understanding at the objects they had cherished in their earthly life. Hetepheres, the queen, wife of Pharaoh, mother of Pharaoh, ancestress of a line of kings, signs to me to follow her.

She leads me to a room, and stands smiling faintly at my enthusiasm as I gaze at the things she treasured five thousand years ago, at the two

sets of ten anklets made of silver, inlaid with dragon-flies of green stone, with cross-bars of blue lapis lazuli and tail-joints of red cornelian. She waves her delicate brown hand with pride towards a wooden box containing eight small alabaster jars and a copper spoon. Seven of the jars once contained the seven traditional perfumed ointments used by great ladies of the Egyptian court ; the eighth held kohl for darkening shadows under beautiful eyes. I remembered that on the walls of a tomb at Beni Hassan Phoenicians are shown bringing this article of beauty culture to the wife of the Governor.

The Queen points out the various treasures, and you cannot help noticing how well manicured she is. There in the case lies her little implement with a sharp end for cleaning the nails, and another with a round end for pressing back the skin. She sees I am amazed, and I fancy I hear a silvery laugh as she holds up a very fine copper needle and shows me its pierced eye. She pauses, and sits down in her carrying-chair, rests her arms on the encircling wooden rail, and gazes towards the great canopied bedstead. Perhaps she remembers the day when it was given her by her husband Sneferu. Suddenly she seems to draw back with a shudder, for as she gazes across the golden drinking-cups, the red-ware basins, the cooking-pots with their loop handles through which a stick could be passed to lift them off the fire, belonging to her

ancient home, she sees her great alabaster sarcophagus.

I regretted parting from her pale shadow there, for it is believed that her coffin had been desecrated by thieves, her embalmed body robbed of its jewels, and thrown out to the dogs of the desert.

As I passed out of the room a stately shade moved forward. He wore the wig of a ruling judge and with great dignity waved to me to follow him down the stairs and into a room below. Here was his own statue seated on a straight-backed throne, all carved out of black diorite.

"Oh! I remember stone like that at the Second Cataract," I said, and the monarch gravely bowed assent and touched the figure behind the statue's head—the Horus hawk with wings spread wide to protect him.

I thought of the temple of black and red granite close to the second pyramid, with its giant square pillars supporting the massive blocks laid across them, and remembered hearing that seven statues of Khafra were found there, so that his Ka was well provided for. He seemed in no hurry, so I looked at other interesting things in the same room.

These all dated from his dynasty—the fourth—somewhere about 2720 B.C. Add that to 1934 and you will see that I am not far wrong in saying that Hetepheres' belongings are nearly 5,000 years old, for she was either the mother or grandmother of Khafra, or Chephren, as he is sometimes called.

Standing there, just as if he were going to step forward to meet you, is a wooden figure with a round bald head and wide-open eyes, holding a sapling which he uses as a staff. Underneath is printed "The Sheikh el Beled," because the workmen who found it thought it so very like the sheik of their village of Sakkara. Near him is a painted limestone statue of a scantily clothed scribe, squatting with a roll of papyrus spread out upon his knees, ready to take down any letter which had to be dictated.

There came a breath of fresh air and sunlight filtered through the museum windows as a beautiful woman clad in white cambric, wearing a necklace of many-coloured beads and with flowers in her hands, came swiftly along the corridor. Several children were clinging round her, and she was followed by a dreamy-eyed man who looked desperately ill.

"You know that we were not really heretics, don't you?" Queen Nefertiti seemed to whisper softly as she approached. "They didn't understand us, all those years ago, and, alas, we did not understand the needs of the kingdom. Come and see the things we loved and lived for," and together we walked to a space at the foot of the stairs which led to the upper floor. There she showed us a flooring of plaster painted in delicate designs of birds and flowers and grasses.

"We tried to imprison some of the beauty of

Nature in our rooms," she said. " Everything that drew life and loveliness from Aton we gloried in. This comes from the palace at Tell-el-Amarna, which we built to be our capital when we left Thebes. Would you care to see what our houses were like? They were usually enclosed by a wall of mud brick, with a doorway and porter's lodge at one point ; through that door you entered the garden, with its flowers and trees and lakes. Mounting a flight of steps built also of mud brick and covered with plaster, you came to the house itself, which formed a square and was surrounded by a veranda, on which the rooms opened. In the centre of the square was another garden. We all loved colour, and the pillars which supported the roof of the rooms were coloured, and the walls and ceilings painted with flowers and various designs."

By this time Akhenaton, the King, had come up with us ; he led me to a plaster panel hanging on the wall, which represented him, with the Queen, in the act of worshipping Aton, the sun-disk, the rays from it ending in hands which pressed into their lips and nostrils the Ankh, the symbol of life. He smiled whimsically. " Our God was a loving father, who cared for and loved his children," he said, " and because I, too, loved him, I dedicated myself to his service, and set up boundary marks in the city, declaring that the son of Aton would not leave the territory set apart for him."

Turning round, he stooped over the coffin lying at his feet. "They hated me, and tried to prevent my living for evermore," he said, gently touching the wooden case and the wrappings, from which the golden cartouche bearing his name had been hacked away.

It was rather tragic, but I couldn't help remembering the despair of some of his loyal subjects who were holding the outposts of the Empire against overwhelming odds, for I had been reading the letters sent by Ribaddi, the faithful governor of Gubla (the town we know as Byblos, in Syria) in which he beseeches Akhenaton to send help, saying: "If the king does not send troops, Gubla will fall—behold, Gubla is not like other towns. Gubla is a faithful city."

Then in a later letter, probably the last Ribaddi wrote before he was taken prisoner and killed, "and the enemy do not depart from the gate of Gubla."

I left them in the lower corridor, and was wondering where to turn next when a party of tourists came trooping upstairs on their way to see Tutankhamen's belongings.

"Oh! I have seen all those things several times," I said to myself.

"No, not all," a shadow murmured softly, "My lamp is illuminated now, so that you can see it as I saw it long ago."

Up the stairs again I went to the corridor and

rooms containing the wonderful treasures found in one of the smaller tombs in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes.

I held my breath. I had seen this lamp of purest alabaster, shaped like a chalice before, and had read that it was double in form, so that when it was lighted from within, the figure of the young Queen could be seen, presenting two long branches to the King. I had been charmed by its beautiful form, but now an electric light had been fitted to it, which glowed through the alabaster as Tutan-khamen had said, I could see what he had seen, and imagined I could hear the Queen wishing him life and happiness for ever as the palm branches betokened.

There had been several additions since I wrote *Twenty-four Strokes with the Pen*. One thing was rather interesting, because it must have been copied from life. Outside the cabin of a model boat, probably a palace treasure, stands the figure of a bandy-legged dwarf wearing a curious wig ; doubtless he was a favourite dwarf who lived in the palace at that time. The ibexes which form the prow of the ship are made of alabaster, but the horns are natural ones and may record some event in the life of the palace when a young ibex was killed and its horns presented to the King (killed by the dwarf?). This was in my mind as I turned to the shadowy form beside me, and the young King seemed to answer my thought—" Yes, a real

person—and a real day in our life ! Most of the treasures were made and placed in the tomb as thank-offerings for the restoration of the worship of Amen. There are a few personal things which I will show you—they mean more to me than the countless wealth weighed in those great golden coffins. I can remember the day when Nefertiti, the Queen, sent this ivory painter's palette to us. She loved painting, as perhaps she told you, and had her children taught to draw and paint, to play and sing. My little wife had lost her palette and was lamenting having done so. Within an hour of the Queen's departure from us a slave arrived with this one, four of the receptacles filled with cakes of red, blue, yellow, and black pigment. The other pots were only half full, but she sent word that she would get some green and gold to fill them. Soon after she was taken ill and died, and my wife refused to use it. We had both loved it and touched it for the sake of the gentle lady from whom it came."

The mysterious whisper ceased, and we walked along the gallery looking at various things: a wooden bedstead covered with gold, the mesh of string, and several head-rests of turquoise-blue glass, rather like the glass made at Hebron to-day, of dark blue faience, and a folding one of ivory which has become stained—ivory shows its age more than most things—decorated with faces of the god Bes. I suppose this was meant to suggest

happy dreams ; from my point of view, a child sleeping on such a bed would more probably have hideous nightmares.

There were lots of vases of alabaster, faience, gold and silver. Here was a little three-legged stool of white-painted wood with a chair to match.

" Did Princess Ankheserramun bring that from her old home ? " I asked.

" Yes," he answered. " It was part of her nursery furniture and she wanted her babies to use it." He sighed deeply. " But we were unfortunate ; no baby feet trod our palace floors. Yet we spent many happy hours playing games before the fire in winter, and on the balcony when the sun was setting over the western hills in the hot days of summer."

He touched an ivory gaming-board, and set the ebony pieces in position ; then took up four ivory strips, white on one side and black on the other, and deftly threw them, telling me that the value of the throw depended on whether the white strip outnumbered the black in falling.

" And this came from my old home," he said, showing me a small box beautifully inlaid with ivory. He translated the words scratched on it in ink : " This belonged to his Majesty when he was a child."

" I must leave you now," he said, " but look at the canopic shrine on its gilded sled. The statues of the four goddesses who stand on each

side facing the shrine with hands outstretched to guard it are very fine."

"Don't you really mind my looking at all these treasures?" I asked, glancing down the long corridor, now filled with people staring eagerly at the exhibits in the glass cases, while others stood waiting to go into the room containing the golden coffin and the gold mask which covered the head of Tutankhamen's mummy, with much of the jewellery found in the tomb.

"Not now," came the answer faintly, "the three thousand years are long since past."

The voice died away into silence. I looked up, meaning to ask what he meant, but he had vanished; I gazed into empty air.

I was alone in the gallery, the tourist crowd had passed on, but the silence was broken by the clank of arms and the tramp of feet as the man whom I had noticed on his war-horse at the door of the museum strode along the corridor.

"I have hastened," he said, "to show you how some of our people were buried, although as the ages go it would be a thousand years later than the things you have been looking at. It is colder here than in my home in Upper Nubia." He shivered as we passed an open window.

"Yes! that drawing is quite good of my tomb," he said, pointing to a scene taken a year or two ago during the excavations at Kostol, south of Abou Simbel. It showed several brick chambers

approached by a sloping ramp, and covered with a huge tumulus.

"But that is what we call a photograph," I interrupted.

"Much the same thing," he answered slightly. "Photograph or drawing, it shows you what is to be seen now. I will explain what it was like when my people swung to the bronze-covered wooden doors at my burial, when the sacrifice was over."

Eagerly I listened, for as he described the scene, a spell came over me and the objects which I had seen in this room of Nubian exhibits took on a different aspect.

Skeletons became live animals, frayed bits of leather strange garments, a silver band the diadem of a prince, and many swords and daggers seemed held in the hands of mortal men.

"I was a ruler long ago," he said, "and when the god of Death slew me in battle, for none of my enemies could have done so save by the will of the gods"—the proud cruel face kindled as he said it—"my people carried my body back across the sands to the tomb which had been prepared for me among my royal kinsmen. I was still clad in my leather tunic, but they placed the silver crown on my head, and bore me to my grave escorted by my soldiers, my war-horse, and slaves with cows and camels and asses, just as the sun was setting."

"Was your war-horse as bravely caparisoned as this?" I asked, pointing to a glass case in which

the model of a bay horse stood, harnessed with beautiful trappings.

" Yes, that was how he followed me into the land of darkness."

" And these others ? " I hesitated as I pointed to several little heaps of bones shown in the photograph.

" Oh ! *those*," he said, " were only the slaves who were killed to accompany me—and those, over there," he waved his long brown hand towards the other side of the room, " are the bones of some of the animals slain in my honour, which your clever excavators have put together, bone by bone."

A sense of horror came over me, he was so fierce and cruel, so different from those other gentle shades. Then he vanished, but I fled in unreasoning terror right out of the museum, glad to find myself in the garden which faces it, bright with many-coloured antirrhinums, and sweet with the scent of roses and heliotrope.

III

SAKKARA

My Dears,

I forget if it is Emerson—I think it is—who writes “God loves men of the forward look,” but what I want in this old land of Egypt is to be one of those who are “of the backward look,” so that I might be able to sit still and see life as it was lived in Egypt on the banks of the Nile near Memphis, one of the oldest of her cities, five thousand years ago. It sounds a strange thing to say, but it is the truth, that if you want to see how life was lived, the best thing you can do is to spend some time in the tombs!—and that is what I did at Sakkara.

I entered three of them, which consist of courtyard, rooms and passages, and the scenes sculptured and painted on the walls began to move, and I saw three of Egypt's great ones—Ty, Ptah-Hotep and Mera—acting, as they had done when the sun rose day by day for them. They had pictured there, daily episodes as well as special incidents in the lives they lived under the Pharaohs of the Old Kingdom five thousand years ago.

One day Mera had been called down to the river bank because there was a fight going on between a crocodile and a hippopotamus. It had evidently stuck in his mind and he told those who were carving and painting his tomb to "keep it for ever." To-day we see this incident, which evidently happened, and apparently struck terror into the minds of some and caused amusement to others. The hippopotamus is stooping down with great mouth open like a monstrous trap to gobble up the scaly beast, but like a terrier attacked by a mastiff, the crocodile determines to get "a word" in first and with cracking jaws and thousand teeth reaches up and nips off the hippopotamus's tail.

One other, suggestive of the old saying "You can take a horse to the water but you cannot make him drink." Evidently slaves of long ago were faced with the same problem. One took a donkey to the water and he would neither drink nor go into it, so another slave pulls him by one foot, while still another pushes him from behind !

And now for the daily happenings of life.

Mera was evidently very happily married, for wandering along the corridor I came upon some suggestive scenes. Perhaps the highly placed Mera some days came back to his home tired and irritable. Then his wife, whose name I don't know, although it may be in the hieroglyphics, played to him upon the harp and the sweet notes soothed the weary breast of the Court official. Sometimes she

suggested that they should have a game of chess together—the wise woman had evidently learnt his favourite game so as to be able to wile away the evening hours. At other times when care seemed to have slipped from his shoulders like a cloak she persuaded him to come with her and watch the children play. We see them sitting and smiling while the children, two boys, recognised by their one lock of hair and medallions round their necks, and four girls with long hair streaming in the breeze made by them as holding hands they dance round in a circle. You could almost hear them singing: “Here we go round the mulberry bush.”

It was all so lifelike, so simple, so amusing, and then as often happens in dark-veiled Egypt we came across something beyond our comprehension. In a niche was a large red statue of black-haired Mera, and on either side of him slits in the wall, rather like air-shafts, through which the spirit of the dead man could return and go in and out among the offerings of fruit and food and furniture laid there for his use, although he had already gone into the land from which we say “no traveller returns.”

Children of to-day, confident of self and of the progress of civilisation, intellectuality and culture, get rather a shock when they are told on entering the tomb of Ty that they will see Art of five thousand years ago which cannot be equalled

in this twentieth century. Even the most self-satisfied, or "century-satisfied," to coin a word of my own, is astounded at the grace, the accuracy and the purity of the drawings and carvings on these white-plastered walls. It is generally agreed that in the drawing of animals no artists, seek them where you will, among the ancients or the moderns have been able to touch them.

I should like to have written the word "House of Peace" over the entrance to the tomb of Ty—for going slowly along these passages and examining them figure by figure, scene by scene, all seems to have been done in such quietude that the atmosphere of white peace still remains. The hurrying of Time and the mutterings of War were surely unheard by those who worked in these silent corridors. Yet two thousand years afterwards the Persians came down like wolves and everything gathered here for eternity was smashed or plundered. The tomb to-day is only a beautiful shell waiting for the spirit which may even now return at sunset.

And now for Ptah-Hotep, who held all sorts of positions under a Pharaoh who lived some 4,570 years ago. Judge of the High Court, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Minister of Public Works—to name only a few of them. Also he was one of the learned of the earth and wrote a book of Maxims for Life and Death. In a way rather like the Proverbs, said to have been written by

King Solomon. It is rather curious that the pictures on the walls of his tomb deal principally with scenes on his farm-lands, sowing, ploughing, reaping, with sport in the marshes such as the snaring of wild birds, and with large quantities of slaves, both men and women, bringing in immense quantities of food for the delectation of his homing spirit. Listen to some of the wise sayings recorded : " Do not be arrogant because of your knowledge." " Words worth listening to are as hard to find as precious stones and yet they may be found amongst mere slave girls in the kitchen "—and the one with which the book ends: speaking of death as the Great Messenger Ptah-Hotep writes : " When thy Messenger comes to carry thee away be thou found by him ready."

Now, I must explain that these are only three of millions of tombs both of rich and poor, in a cemetery which lasted for more than three thousand years, of which the great step pyramid of Sakkara, said to be the oldest stone building in the world, was the centre. I once had a dream that going to Heaven was like mounting a steep flight of stairs. Whether King Zoser had had a similar dream or if this was merely the earliest architectural effort at building a funeral pyre which would last throughout the ages, I don't pretend to know. At any rate it has stood on the edge of the desert for more than five hundred decades, first solitary and then with many neighbours.



Ancient wooden Coffin, Sakkara

It is unsafe to go inside this old pyramid, but around, excavators have been busy and within the last few years have succeeded in clearing away the burying sand and have brought to light the temple tombs, or more accurately the chapel tombs of members of the royal family. These buildings present a perfectly new type from those previously found.

They are joined to one another like houses in a terrace and once had flights of steps leading to an upper storey. The façade of each, with slender fluted columns, is three-sided, having an open courtyard with the door leading to the chapel in the centre of the north wall. All is built of small blocks of limestone beautifully dressed and fitted together. The whole sacred area is enclosed by a girdling wall, and from it at one point there is a long corridor of fluted columns, standing in two straight lines leading to the big temple court before the eastern side of the pyramid.

What seems to have intrigued all the learned archæologists is that these fluted columns place the origin of the Doric pillars on this sandy plateau in the shadow cast by the ancient step pyramid, rather than upon the flowery hills of Greece.

If you want an eerie experience I suggest that you come with me to the Serapeum, the burying-places of the sacred bulls. The long dark corridors broken at intervals by squares, in each of which

stands a gigantic red or black granite sarcophagus which once contained a sacred mummified bull of Apis, once the living emblem of the god Ptah of Memphis. I believe there were twenty-four of them, but they have been rifled, so that Mariette, the French excavator, succeeded in finding no mummy intact, only a head and fragments of bone in one sarcophagus. The Bull Apis was a renowned oracle and was thought to give answers to certain questions and to foretell events. One mode of answer was calculated by observing which of two chambers it chose to enter. Rather like the lobby in the House of Commons. The Ayes and the Noes. It is said that it foretold the death of Germanicus by refusing food offered by him and of Eudoxus by licking his garments.

Now these bulls had to fulfil certain conditions before they could be reckoned a deity, and the marks seem to vary according to the many versions of the worship still extant or in the imagination of your particular dragoman. You are told, or you read, that the priests at the end of twenty-five years, which was the life appointed for an Apis bull, scoured the country for a black bull which had a white star on his neck, or a crescent on his side, a white triangle on his forehead and a black lump under his tongue, and a double tail ! !

Once again questions chased one another like an express through our brains ; where could they

hope to find such a bull? Were they secretly bred? What could be the meaning of the distinctive marks—stars, triangles, crescents, perhaps, but why a double tail? These questions would naturally throng one's mind in the clear desert atmosphere, under the brilliant blue sky of Egypt, but when soundlessly following after a silent party in the darkness, the mystery gripped you. That was the end of things. Whys and wherefores remained unanswered. They didn't matter! Why should they?

And yet these tombs of the sacred bulls provide one of the best and most reliable records of Egyptian history, for the hieroglyphics on each of these great sarcophagi give accurate dates for the mummifying of the bulls each quarter of a century, naming the Pharaoh reigning at the time, although unhappily the historical records of the later Pharaohs have been lost.

Odd, isn't it? That just where I felt things most ghostly I was told that here I might reckon I was standing on sober fact!

Yours, —

IV

BENI HASSAN

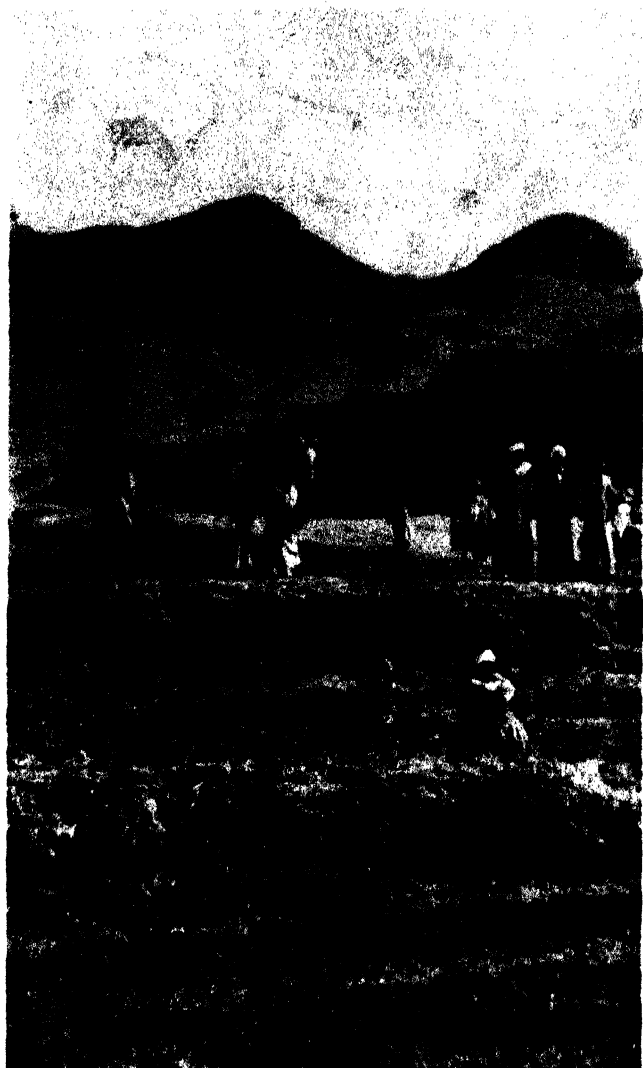
Dears,

I am going to tell you about the rock temple and the tombs at Beni Hassan, on the eastern bank of the Nile between Cairo and Assiout, but first let me tell you that the name Beni Hassan is translated "Children of Hassan." I presume long years ago there was a tribe whose leader was called Hassan.

As usual, we were escorted by swarms of little black imps, boys and girls, who gathered round us shouting "Baksheesh."

I must tell you of our mode of progression. We were each carried in chairs, with two long poles run through wicker holes which rested on the shoulders of four of Cook's black sailors.

I felt as if I were Queen Hetepheres! The rest of the party went on donkeys and were guarded by two mounted policemen in khaki with red tarbooshes on their heads, having rifles on their saddles, and long canes in their hands which they swished at the children when they became an annoyance.



Policemen at Beni Hassan

It was a glorious morning, the sky the deepest of blue, the sands and the hills yellow, the cliffs beyond them almost white. Gaily we went along, our sailor men singing snatches of native songs, perhaps to help them to persevere with their heavy burden !

The policemen spurred their ponies and made surreptitious drives at the children, scattering them far and wide, but the little beggars regarded it rather as a joke, and soon returned. The whole affair was thoroughly good-tempered.

The long trail took us finally to a small temple carved out of the rock in a gully in these limestone cliffs, and dedicated, according to the long inscription cut high above the door by Queen Hatasu, or Hatshepsut, in honour of the cat-headed goddess Pasht.

There was a niche in one wall where the statue of the goddess once stood, and in a hole in the floor had been found many mummified cats.

Now let me a tale unfold as it was told to us that sunny morning in December. George, one of the best known of Cook's dragomen, who was in charge of us, told it with a smile and a twinkle of the eye.

The excavators who were examining this temple came upon these cats and shipped them to Liverpool, on the way to one of the museums. All went well until they got within the damper regions of the West. Then the cats, which had remained

mummified for more than three thousand years, began to decompose, until by the time Liverpool was reached no semblance of a cat remained, and the result was that they were only fit to be used as manure or fertiliser. I wondered whether some garden had been specially enriched by a cartload of manure which had once been surrounded by the odour of sanctity in far-off Egypt.

I expect Thothmes III, the jealous half-brother and possible husband of Queen Hatasu, who seems to have been kept in the background during the Queen's lifetime, would have smiled if he could hear this tale, for like a spiteful schoolboy wherever he could he took a delight in erasing his half-sister's cartouche, and this little out-of-the-way temple was no exception. We could still see the chisel marks, although Seti I, taking advantage of the blank, had had his name inserted there.

Later we returned along the river banks, and then, on our own feet, climbed and were partly dragged up the road cut in the limestone cliff to see some wonderful tombs cut out of the rock for a family of military nobles who ruled in this province about 2000 B.C. Their names are too awful to be pronounced by European tongues. Try saying "Khnemhotpe" or "Amenemhet." Those are the names which are on the printed notices over the iron gates through which you enter. The only one I could manage was "Kiti," the same name as that of a governor of Assiout,

whose tomb we had yet to see. So let us start with him first.

There are pillars with lotus-flower capitals cut out of the rock. The lotus flower is a symbol of the resurrection, so keep that in your minds, for I shall be often mentioning them in the temples, and the imagery is exquisite. The lotus flower lies in bud beneath the surface of the water, waiting for the sun-rays to touch the lake. When the bright beam strikes the water above it, the bud rises and the flower opens.

There was the usual pit in the floor where the mummy was preserved, in the belief that as long as the mummy lasted the spirit would be able to return to visit it and receive the offerings brought there. Each human being, according to the psychology of ancient Egypt, had several parts, body, heart, soul, mind and spirit, an earth-shadow and another part called by them "Sek-hem," or power, all of which seems to be wonderfully interwoven and dependent upon the part which we count of least importance—the body.

The walls of the tomb are covered with paintings on the plaster, chiefly of brown-skinned youths who seem to be engaged in wrestling or in gymnastic exercises ; a long line of them, some with one leg outstretched and others with the leg resting on a bent knee. I saw a boy in exactly the same attitude only this morning. When the Arabs conquered

this part of the world they used these tombs as stables and rifled them of all their treasures, but evidently were neither interested enough nor vindictive enough to willingly destroy these paintings, which have lasted for close on four thousand years.

The man with the awful name, Khnemhotpe, was also a governor of the province, but he evidently presumed greatly, and married the daughter of the reigning king.

I imagine she was a beautiful woman, who, like Queen Jezebel, desired to appear as a veritable king's daughter, and so the Governor, who was a soldier of distinction, set off on an expedition to open communications with Phœnicia, for we see merchants with beards and hooked noses from there bearing kohl for the darkening of the lady's eyes and for the enhancing of her beauty.

In this tomb there are pictures of wild animals, and wherever the Governor went "his dog was sure to go."

In a small inner room once stood a statue of the man, in the likeness of his mummy, so as to make assurance of his resurrection doubly sure.

One more awful name and I have done—"Amenemhet." A name apparently common enough among the Egyptians of the Empire.

This tomb is a marvellous bit of architecture, for remember it is all carved or hewn out of the living rock. The ceiling is slightly arched and still

shows that it was painted with stars, so that the mummy might wait under the eternal sky. There are four great Doric pillars curved and fluted like those at the Parthenon, but hewn and carved by men who had lived and died one thousand years earlier.

In a little inner room are the bases on which once stood the statues of the long-named man, his wife and daughter. Pictures on the plastered walls show the mummy being taken in a boat to Abydos to visit the tomb of Osiris, the god of the Other World, and to receive his blessing. This seems to have been the general method of procedure in all the funerals of the great, from the earliest times down to the end of the Empire. Behind the boat containing the mummy are other boats laden with offerings.

The colours on these pictured walls are still bright, chiefly blues, greens and yellows, and the drawing of the animals, as in the tombs at Sakkara, may be considered as another Wonder of the World. Gazelles and antelopes are shown behind a sort of criss-cross fencing to convey the idea that they have been driven by command within an area in order that "the Duke of the Gazelles," another of Amenemhet's titles, might have pleasure in hunting.

Yours, —

ASSIOUT

My Dears,

Egypt is one of the queerest places for having place names which are pronounced the same but spelt differently. Here is one of them : Assiout, Assiut, Asyut!

The Greeks called it Lycopolis, meaning the Wolf Town, because its guardian deity was Wepwawet, the wolf, who, like Anubis, the jackal, was regarded as the guardian of the dead and their guide as they passed through the gateway of the other world.

Oh ! The clatter as the Nile boat moors alongside where the natives have a tempting show of varied goods spread out on the river bank ; rugs, peculiar to Assiout, of sheep's wool dyed various colours, tent work, which to the uninitiated is a design of birds, flowers, gods cut out in red, blue, orange and black cotton material and stitched on to squares or strips of coarse white stuff with very large stitches. The result is effective, in some cases gorgeous, although too close inspection would not be in the best of taste !

There are articles of ivory and amber too, and long scarves and shawls made of coarse net of black, white and various colours with designs in gold and silver tinsel, or perhaps bits of tin would describe it best, woven into it.

Each and everyone cries out his wares in English, putting exorbitant prices on them until a likely customer is brave enough to haggle, then reserve is swept aside, and the real bargaining spirit of the East is evident.

Often at long last a shawl or a rug is thrown on board at a tenth of the price originally asked, just as the gangway is being drawn away and the ropes loosed for the boat to start on her upward journey.

The boat usually sleeps at night, slipping away at dawn in order to reach the place from which the expedition is to be made.

After this digression, I want you to see what I saw of Assiout, but not to experience quite the thrill which I did.

We managed to elude some of the very persistent brown salesmen in long white nightgowns, brown overcoats and little round caps perched on the back of their heads, as we mounted the flight of steps leading from the boat up the river bank and walked towards the carriage awaiting us.

We were all arranged like the animals going into the Ark, two by two, but we were in little

light victorias drawn by swift horses, driven by excitable natives. Those three words, light, swift, excitable, explain the nature of our drive along the broad streets, bordered by trees, of modern Assiout, for each charioteer thought his horse the best and determined to reach the end of the long street of fine houses, leading to the station, first.

My dears, it was on the alarming side and, we thought, dangerous to life and limb, but nothing happened and we drove safely across the railway line into the old town of narrow streets, where a cinema exhibited a large bill of a film entitled *Le Champion*, anglicised into *The Champ*!—on past rows of shops, chief among which were chemists.

Apparently every third shop sold drugs, soaps, patent medicines and tooth-paste, and I wondered if the people of Assiout were specially sickly or specially clean.

Then the streets grew narrower still, darker and dirtier, although the things to be sold were brighter of hue and more fascinating ; cottons and silks of brilliant colours and designs made to adorn the heads of the men and the backs of the women on festival days.

But a greater surprise was in store for us as we left the bazaars and came on to the road leading to the hills, for beside it on either hand were rude straw huts, crowded with men, women and children

of darker hue than those we had seen in the town—desert-born, resting for a while near the haunts of men—primitives in every sense of the word.

Think of it—straw huts, human beings, baskets of tomatoes, most unsavoury-looking bits of raw meat hanging up outside, and newly baked bread in large shallow earthenware pans, all in the burning sunshine and all literally covered with big black flies !

We were glad to breathe the clean desert air as we climbed on foot the steep white path up the hill to the rock tombs of men who ruled as nomarchs of this district between three and four thousand years ago.

A magnificent view of the surrounding country lay beneath us. Wide green fields through which the Nile winds like a broad silver ribbon in the bright daylight. Before the slump, acres upon acres of these fields were sown with cotton, but what there is no market for is no longer grown.

The town of Assiout crouches in the plain. Round the shoulder of the hill clings the modern cemetery, about which I will tell you later, and beyond stretches the brown Libyan Desert.

Now, having got your breath after the stiff climb while looking around you, come into the large tomb hewn out of the hillside for Khety, or

as the catalogue of the Cairo Museum calls him, "Mesehti," and, as all the guides say: "See what is to be seen."

This is very little, a square court with hewn pillars like a memorial chapel leading into a smaller room. All bare, a little defaced carving to be seen on the walls, and the tale that a few mummies were found here a short time ago and were hidden again. But listen to the story of him who once lay buried here.

Khety, the son of Khety, was Prince of Assiout and ruled the province for one of the weak Pharaohs. Discontent spread among the people so that even Middle Egypt was aflame. Then Khety arose, gathered together an army and a river-fleet, and escorted King Merikere on a punitive expedition which resulted in order being restored throughout the kingdom.

And so mightily pleased was Khety at this achievement that he had two groups of forty soldiers from Egypt and the Sudan carved and placed, together with a boat, beside his coffin in the tomb. They are no longer there, but we had seen them in the Cairo Museum. Little models of Egyptian soldiers marching four abreast armed with bronze-tipped lances and painted shields; every shield having a different mark upon it so that each man might know his own, and woolly-headed soldiers from the Sudan carrying bows and flint-pointed arrows.



‘ George ’ taken outside Rock Tombs at Assiout

ASSIOUT

As I told you, this tomb had been tenanted, but the tomb we went to next, lower down on the hill-side, had never been occupied.

It is one of the largest known rock tombs and consists of a forecourt with arched roof, a large square hall with two shrines on the wall facing you as you enter, and a shrine, reached by a sort of corridor, on the far wall of which is sculptured a figure of Hepzefa, Governor of Assiout, with three women bearing lotus flowers before him.

In one of my other letters I have explained why lotus flowers were used in funerary decorations.

You can still look down the deep burial shaft, sunk for the body of the man who never came back from Ethiopia, but before setting out for his appointment as "overseer of Upper Egypt all of it," he had made ten contracts with the priests of the temples of Wepwawet and Anubis at Assiout so that no day should pass on which his spirit welfare had been unprovided for.

We should say he had left nothing to chance, but to make assurance doubly sure he wrote a special letter to his Ka-priest, saying: "See, I have endowed thee with land, with people, with cattle, with gardens and with everything, like an exalted man of Assiout, in order that thou mayest stand over all my affairs which I have given into thy hand."

I have told you at the beginning of this lengthy letter that Assiout was dedicated to the wolf. On

the way down the hill-side, which is one vast hill of the dead, close beside the square doorways of many of the excavated or rifled tombs, were smaller square openings in which had been found mummified wolves, doubtless buried there in order that they might escort "the great ones" through the dark underworld.

It was a Friday, the Mohammedan Sunday, when we were at Assiout the first time, and as we skirted the Moslem cemetery on our way back to our carriages we found that it was populated by the living.

Most families have a large tomb built like a house, with a reception room for mourners and a room where the dead are laid to rest. To this house the living repair Friday by Friday and spread out the food they have brought with them, which is afterwards distributed to the poor of the village.

Some tombs are painted white, some colour-washed and decorated with rude paintings on the walls and above the doors and windows. Invariably you see palm branches laid beside them, because of the belief that palms grow in the Paradise to which Moslems go after death.

I certainly preferred this visit to the cemetery, under the deep blue sky on the white hill-side, with the happy laughter of little brown children, to that which we had paid to the Great City of the Dead at Cairo when we went to see the tombs of the Mamelukes. Then we had slowly driven

ASSIOUT

through streets of silent, shuttered houses, inhabited only by those sleeping the last long sleep.

It was not a Friday. No human voices broke the silence, the only sound was that made by the feeble, slippered feet of some aged custodian appointed to watch over their last abode.

Yours, ——

VI

ABYDOS

My Dears,

I have set myself a terrific task in attempting to tell you of Abydos, for its history stretches back to the earliest times in Egypt of which we have any knowledge, and the ruins of the present temples, dating from the time of Seti I and Rameses II, are among the largest and finest of the many great temples in the Nile valley.

First let me take you with me and give you a picture ; afterwards I will tell you the story of Abydos and try to put hard facts as clearly and as entertainingly as I can.

Imagine a party of tourists leaving the Nile steamer at Baliana, or Balliena as it is sometimes spelt, and, mounted on donkeys or seated in cars, starting off for the Sacred City of the Dead. As so often happens, we had to go through a dirty native village first, and then, passing several larger and more European-looking houses on the outskirts of the town, we drove for about an hour along a road between wide stretches of green

cultivation until we came to a few mud houses, a group of palm trees, and we had arrived !

Before us the ruins of the majestic temple begun by Pharaoh Seti I of the Nineteenth Dynasty, and completed by his son Rameses II, lay on the edge of the desert which stretches away behind it, to the south, white limestone hills such as were the burying-places of the nobles at Beni Hassan and Assiout, and around us old men and children who besought us to buy necklaces of carnelian beads, which they have found in the sand, and so are probably old as well as real.

Abydos, from the very early times, was regarded as a sacred city, and its importance was reckoned as being more religious than secular.

Tradition said that the head of the murdered and dismembered Osiris, the first King of Egypt, was buried here.

Later and according to fact, the Kings of the First and Second Dynasties made their tombs here, and although the Great Pyramid builders and the builders of the tombs in the Silent Valley at Thebes did not rest here, they were each and all brought on a pilgrimage to the holy place of their forefathers before being finally "locked" in the tombs they had built for themselves elsewhere.

The god who was first worshipped here was the jackal-headed god Wepwawet, " opener of the Ways " and the guide of the dead. Later the god was called Khenti-Amenti, " The first of the

Westerners," i.e. those who had "gone West," and, later again, the worship of these two gods was merged in that of Osiris, the King, who was regarded as the god of the resurrection.

I am going to try and help you to get a plan in your mind of this temple, which differs in form from most of the Egyptian temples.

Let us go into the Second Court of the Temple—the first has disappeared and this one is in a state of ruin. Facing us is a wide building with twelve square pillars in front of it, and against it giant figures of Rameses II stand at intervals. Through a door in the centre we enter the Hypostyle Hall, and on looking back see that originally there were three doors on either side, which have been roughly blocked up, and are told that this was the work of Rameses after the death of his father, thus limiting the entrance to one door only. This pillared hall is divided from a second hall containing two rows of columns with a third row upon a raised step, out of which open the seven sanctuaries.

Now, the names of the seven gods worshipped here are these: In the central sanctuary, Amen Ra, with three sanctuaries to Osiris, Isis and Horus on the right, and to Harmachis, Ptah and Seti himself, surrounded by the symbols of life and happiness, on the left. Each of these sanctuaries was closed by a cedar-wood door, which of course no longer exists, and was opened on festival days by the King with a golden key. At the entrance to

each of them there is still a little niche in which once stood the image of the god to whom the particular sanctuary was dedicated, so that although the door was shut after the King had entered, worshippers might leave their offerings before the god whose favour they were seeking. But the King would enter the ante-chamber and pass on into the holy of holies, just as we can do to-day, although he would see more than we do. In the ante-chamber he would see the sacred barque of the god, wherein was placed the portable image of Osiris, Isis or Horus, of Amen Ra, Harmachis, Ptah or Seti, and in the shrine itself the figure of the god set against a wall inlaid with gold and precious stones.

Behind these seven sanctuaries, and at right angles to them, is the third large court, called the Osiris Hall, with three small shrines to Horus, Osiris and Isis opening out of it.

It was into this court that the people came on ordinary days, bringing offerings in order that the priests might make sacrifice for the souls of their nearest and dearest. In the Isis Chapel she is shown, in a carving, sistrum in hand, by means of which she expels any evil spirit who may chance that way.

One of the principal things to notice in this wonderful temple is the difference in the carvings of the reliefs in one part from the other. Seti and the men of Seti followed the perfect art of the

early centuries by carving in high relief ; by doing so, the figures of the gods and kings seem to be coming to meet the worshipper ; but the masterful Rameses changed the method by deepening the lines of the carving into that of low relief, so that men's eyes pay more attention to the outline of the figures than to the figures themselves, thereby giving the impression that the gods and kings are receding out of the vision of the worshipper. From ancient records, Seti seems to have been a man of fine qualities, so that perhaps the reliefs are typical of the difference in character between the father and the son. To Seti, it was " the gods and I," to Rameses, it was " I and the gods."

Another interesting thing which archæologists and artists have learnt from studying the pictured walls of this temple is that the decoration and paintings were evidently begun at the top, for while the upper part of the walls are brilliantly coloured, after the reliefs have been drawn and carved, the lower part is white, showing thereby that it is still unfinished.

These walls and pillars must have looked as if many-coloured veils had been lowered over them as the painting was finished, but to my mind, the delicacy of the carving on the white-plastered walls, uncoloured though they be, is equally attractive.

Men of learning became very excited a few years ago when in the long corridor, now called " The Gallery of the Kings," which leads out of the

second Hypostyle Hall, on the left, the famous "Table of the Kings" was found. All the cartouches of the Pharaohs are carved on it, from Mena, whose date is given as about 3500 B.C., to Seti I, 1300 B.C., with the exception of three, who to us are three of the most interesting of the line.

I am talking glibly of the "Table of the Kings," forgetting that probably you have no idea what it is like. Imagine you are looking at a long wall. On the left hand is carved Rameses as a youth. You will realise that he is Crown Prince, because he has one curl hanging down at the side of his head. A high priest also wears a side lock, but he has a leopard skin over his shoulders.

Rameses is reading all the names of Egypt's Kings from a roll which he is holding stretched out in both hands. Seti is behind him, holding a terra-cotta censer, shaped like an arm, into the bowl of which he drops a grain of incense as each name is pronounced, thus remembering in prayer those who have gone before, and as if to show that he himself realises a monarch's need of divine guidance, his own name is repeated time and again.

After this we went down a long corridor built by the Pharaoh Menephtah, 1330 B.C., the walls of which are painted with scenes showing the twelve hours of the night as gates ruled over by the god of darkness, through which the spirit must pass before he reaches the land of the sun-god.

This corridor leads to the great hall, which is sometimes called "The Osireion," as it was thought to have been the burial-place of the god Osiris, and that the large chamber in the end wall was the chapel to which all the dead were brought from different parts of Egypt in order that they might be near the god of the resurrection before being "locked" for ever in the tombs prepared for them.

The hall is divided into three aisles and is built of hard red sandstone with square-cut black granite columns like those in the Temple of the Sphinx at Gizeh. It is surrounded by seventeen cells which open on to a ledge overhanging the moat, which is filled with water from a natural spring; thus the central part of this columned hall is isolated from the rest of the building except by boat.

It has been suggested and is, I believe, generally accepted that this central hall was built as an allegory in stone of the tomb of Osiris as if on an island surrounded by the waters of the great deep, and that the large chamber with its roof shaped like the lid of a sarcophagus was the cenotaph of Seti I, i.e. a memorial before Osiris, of him whose body would be carried through the long, dim, painted galleries of his tomb until it reached the final chamber in the Valley of the Kings.

This is a typical and much more fascinating version of this dull solution of what was one of the most exciting discoveries since the War.

Wise men of to-day have tried to pump the sheet of still water dry, in order that further excavations may be made, but the more they pump, the deeper grows the water. Now some say that it is a spring of magic which men of old willed should ever protect the way into this older temple, wherein verily the body of Osiris lies.

When I think of this building behind the temple of Seti, I shall always have two pictures in my mind, one as it might have looked long centuries ago, one as it is to-day.

Now for the "spirit picture." It is night. The dim black temple, with mighty granite monoliths, surrounded by still green water. On the far side, a narrow doorway opening into eternal darkness, in which lies a bier, shaped like a bed. On it rests a coffin, in form like him who sleeps within it, waiting, waiting for the blessing of "the opener of the way."

Bright shone the sun each morning we were there, light like sword-thrusts cleft the darkness of the temple. The sky was the colour of a forget-me-not, and I fancied I heard the voice of the young Rameses chanting the names of Egypt's long-dead kings.

We walked, or rather staggered, over the sand to the Ramesseum, a temple built by Rameses II early in his long reign and dedicated to the god Osiris, but unfortunately it is very much ruined.

Rameses, always mindful of posterity, caused a

description of its glories to be placed on the south wall of the temple. Among other things, it tells of its treasury, filled with costly stones, silver and gold, of its gardens, fragrant with incense trees and plants from the land of Punt, of its doorways, one of black granite mounted with copper, another of pink granite with doors of beaten bronze.

There are three rooms leading off one of the columned halls, called the Room of Linen, the Room of Ornaments, and the Room of Offerings, because of the reliefs carved on the walls. My mind pictured them, filled with the offerings laid there by pilgrims, rich with sacred vessels used in the temple worship, and a vestry where the priests hung their robes of office. I may be quite wrong but I like to dally with the idea.

On the walls of one of the courts, I think it is the first of the two eight-square-columned halls, there are carved rows upon rows of offerings, either which had been made or which might be made to the god. Among them were drawings of legs of mutton, and of loaves of bread, just the same flat loaves which you can see in the dusty village streets to-day. I noticed curious marks before both the meat and the bread, one like an old-fashioned rounded croquet hoop and the other like the Greek letter Rho, and was told that they signified the numbers ten and one hundred respectively.

Tragedy has befallen the five figures of grey granite, which wait sadly in the sanctuary—Seti I, a queen whose name is apparently unknown to men of to-day—probably the mother of Rameses, say I—Osiris, Rameses himself, and a god so much battered that he is unidentifiable, and even with my vivid imagination I was unable to give a name to him !

I turned to leave ancient Abydos oppressed by the thought of the countless dead who lie buried “ somewhere ” in the silent sands, and by the sight of the ears of broken terra cotta, symbols of the listening ears to whom prayers were offered in those far-off days ; and then the wind blew softly, reminding me of Ezekiel’s vision in the Valley of Jehosaphat and of the pregnant question : “ Can these dry bones live ? ” and like him I answered : “ O Lord God thou knowest.”

For the present,
Fare ye well.

VII

DENDERA

Dears,

I am sure you will feel that you are being defrauded when I tell you that the temple at Dendera is one of the youngest on the Nile banks, and yet I think you will love it. It is dedicated to the goddess Hathor, Goddess of Life and Joy, and through the temple, inside and out, and also in the smaller building, called the Birth-house of Horus, there is a feeling of youth and happiness and of the innocence of childhood. Even to-day at the tall entrance gates you are met by baby children, who for the amusement of tourists cover their naked brown bodies with the long, green stalks of wild mustard, the small yellow blossoms reaching well above their heads. The children wriggle and the flowers bob, giving the suggestion of walking maypoles.

Dendera always seems to have been the home of Hathor, the Egyptian Venus, for in the long distant past it is said that Cheops, the builder of the Great Pyramid, raised her temple here, then later, King

Pepi, of the Sixth Dynasty. Of course the Rameses II and III came here, but it was Ptolemy X who began the existing beautiful temple. Its walls record history by a blank ! I must explain. The Kings who built the temple used to cause their cartouches with their royal and their secret names, known only to God, to be carved on the walls—these are left blank, for the temple was in process of building when the war broke out between the Greeks and the Romans. Now the priests waited to see which way the cat would jump, for fear lest the victorious party should wreak vengeance on this house of stone which might bear the name of the conquered foe. Therefore, the temple remains unto this day, and on its outside wall you can see deep carved the beautiful Queen Cleopatra, with her little son, Cæsarion, attended by his guardian spirit. I told you this was a child's temple, didn't I? but as you know, Cæsarion, the child of Cleopatra and Julius Cæsar, was born under an unlucky star, and he was later murdered by Augustus. I have wandered away again. I want you to come inside, outside, and if you will to creep deep down into the crypt, where you will see the cartouche of King Pepi, which the Greeks put here to help perpetuate history when they began to rebuild the temple, and also a beautiful relief of the goddess Hathor. The columns are very fine, the capitals being carved to represent the goddess Hathor with a woman's face and cow's

ears. The roof is painted with stars in a deep blue sky, but the colour, of course, long since gone ; among the stars is an elongated figure of the goddess Nut. Her body is curved, her long arms and hands drooping so that they touch the earth again, in which her feet are firmly planted. The sun is rising from her lap, while from her mouth the moon is issuing, that all may realise that she is a goddess both of the day and of the night. There is a clever little bit of special imagery to represent the benediction of this temple dedicated to Hathor.

On one of the walls a tree is carved, from the topmost branch of which rises the head of the goddess, upon whom the sun is shedding his life-giving rays.

We went the way of the processions of old on to the roof, passing a little kiosk, open to the sky, from which the priests waited for the appearance of the star Sirius, and into another little building where was found on the ceiling the famous black stone with the signs of the Zodiac carved on it ; this is now in Paris, but an exact copy of it has been made and placed in the original position. On the walls are carved a series of reliefs showing the gradual return from death to life of the god Osiris. You see him first as a mummy, lying stark and stiff, then one foot is moving, in the next a hand is raised, then the whole man stirs and sits up, until finally the full resurrection is complete.

This is shown as a scarab or beetle, the symbol of immortality.

From the flat roof of this little building we had a beautiful view of the green Nile Valley, with the brown desert beyond stretching as far as the Red Sea, and saw as well the sockets in which the banners of the different gods who came to visit Hathor were placed.

It must have been a very impressive sight when from the temple roof flew the various standards of the districts. The wolf of Assiout, the ram of Thebes, the hawk of Edfu, the crocodile of Komombo, but, of course, ever above the topmost roof the banner of Hathor flew.

There were gargoyles, very like those we see on the roofs of our cathedrals, to carry off the infrequent rain from the roof. When it does rain in Egypt—it does ! And there is also an interesting series of reliefs showing the King first breaking the soil with a pick-axe for the building of this house of Hathor, then with a stone, as if laying the foundation, then burning incense to make the whole place sacred to the goddess, and finally laying offerings before her.

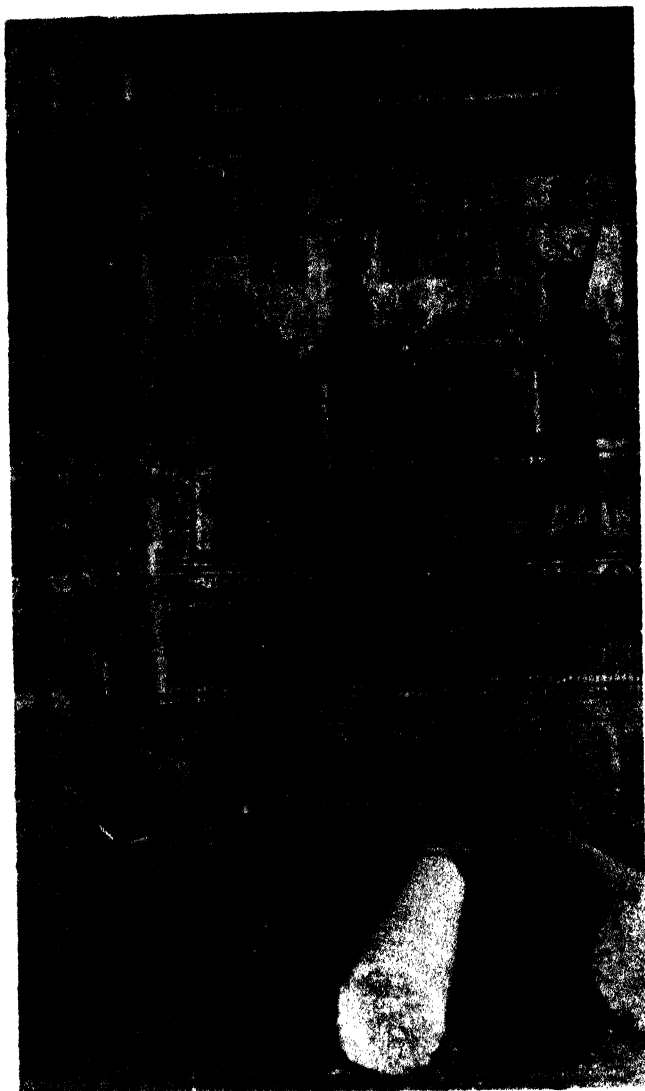
Under a baking sun we walked across the sandy space from the great temple to the little one, passing the sacred lake, where it is said the pilgrims bathed, and where once a year the King was rowed in the sacred barque twelve times round the lake, beseeching a blessing from the goddess on

each of the twelve months of the year. Meantime the people prayed, believing that for one brief moment each year the sky was opened, and the prayer which at that particular moment reached the ear of the deities was certain of being heard and granted. What a picture might be painted—the still lake, the Pharaoh in the gilded boat, and the people kneeling close together on the water's edge looking upward—the blue sky parted and one white bird of prayer winging its way into the presence-chamber of the gods !

The small building still within the girdling wall is called the Birth-house of Horus, the son of Hathor. Here again we come to the babies. On the walls are reliefs showing Horus as an infant being nursed by Hathor, and next when he is a little older sucking his thumb like any little boy of two years old, and above him the god Bes, the patron saint of little Egyptian children. He is so ugly, and yet there is rather a charming fancy told about him, for he brings happiness wherever he goes, and when the little brown babies smiled in their sleep, mothers of long ago would say that Bes had appeared to their little one or whispered in his ear.

I began with little brown babies decked in flowers—and I end with a sleeping baby smiled on by old Bes.

Yours, —



Infant and Child Relief at Dendera.
Temple of Hathor. Birth House.

VIII

LUXOR AND KARNAK

My Family, all of You,

This is going to be a very long letter, so all must share it.

It was in the late afternoon that we went into the temple at Luxor—not my first visit by a good many.

The present entrance is by a flight of wooden steps, leading down to the temple level near the forecourt built by Amenophis III, a great square surrounded on three sides by double rows of folded papyrus-bud columns. This is where the courtiers assembled.

Then we went into the Hypostyle Hall of the priests, which has an aisle leading straight through the two vestibules through the later sanctuary built by Alexander the Great into a columned hall in front of the original sanctuary, which is quite small, with four columns, the walls being ornamented with scenes, one of them showing Amenophis dancing before Amen Ra, and another the King being led into the very presence of the god.

From the Hypostyle Hall we went out on the left of the temple and entered a little room, which has most interesting and entertaining reliefs on the wall. Interesting because they show ancient diplomacy, and entertaining because of the way in which the divine right of kings was portrayed in days of old.

There are three rows of scenes, beginning at the right end of the lowest row and working left, the middle row goes the opposite way from left to right and the top one back again.

Amenophis had to impress upon the nations and his own people that he was a very important and awe-inspiring individual, because, although the son of a Pharaoh, his mother had been a foreigner, and he himself had not married a princess of the royal house of Egypt, but the Lady Tiy, whose father and mother were Yuya and Thuya, Master of the Horse and Mistress of the Robes. And so he lighted on the same expedient as his great ancestress, Queen Hatasu, had done and claimed origin from Amen Ra, the great god of Thebes himself.

In these reliefs Khnum, the creator-god, is seen moulding two children on the potter's wheel, Amenophis and his Ka—later Amen Ra revealing himself as divine to the mother of Amenophis. Then the goddess Isis presents the new-born child to the god, who takes him into his arms, thus accepting him as his son, and finally Amenophis is represented as a grown man and Pharaoh.

Those are the important parts of the Temple of Luxor as it first was planned.

We came back to the forecourt and looked up with wonder at the great colonnade, which led up to it—a double row of majestic columns of beautiful flower capitals open to the sunlight. It is a vexed question as to which of the Pharaohs, Amenophis III, Tutankhamen, or Haremheb, should have the credit of them. I don't mind a bit, nor if they were alone or only an unfinished part of a great hall like that at Karnak. They are beautiful as they are, whether in the early morning or in the glowing light of sunset as they rear their lofty heads in the sunlit air.

We walked between these great sentinels and entered another forecourt, built at a later date by the warlike Rameses II. It, like that of Amenophis, is surrounded by papyrus-bud columns, but they are of a far heavier type and from between the portals made by the giant blocks of sandstone which connect them granite statues of Rameses step forth.

On the outside walls of this part of the temple, Rameses the warrior is portrayed, but on the inside walls, the pictures are those of the Luxor Festival, when the sacred barque of Amen with the image of the god in it was brought upon the bosom of the Nile from Karnak to Luxor, accompanied by singing, dancing, music and offerings. Here it was received and welcomed with great sacrifices and

rejoicings, and later returned to Karnak for the final ceremonies.

Just as the sun was setting we ended this visit and stood in front of the great pylon, noting the grooves for the flagstaffs, and gazed up at the two sitting statues of Rameses which remain, and at the great king standing there, facing towards Karnak.

The Fast of Ramadan was not yet over, and while we stood there the sun dipped behind the horizon, the gun on the river bank was fired, and the muezzin called to prayer from the minaret of the little mosque of Abou Haggag.

I think this is one of the few temples where I am glad that the passage of time and exposure to the fierce light of the sun have taken away the gorgeousness of colour from the pillars and reliefs. Now this temple of light depends almost entirely on the sharp contrasts of day and night, of sunshine and shadow, for its beauty. No one having been within its columned aisles and seen the sunlight striking the open flowers of the colonnade or the folded petals of its courts can ever forget it.

A glorious sanctuary dedicated to the Amen Ra, sun-god of Thebes, whether by "his son" Amenophis III, "his faithful" Haremheb, or "his rival" Rameses, matters not. It is the sun-god's, and his it will remain.

The next day we went once more to Karnak, following the road lined for a long part of the way

by broken ram-headed sphinxes, symbols of the god Amen, whose cathedral city we were about to enter. I reminded myself, time and again, that the god Amen was the rival of the Pharaohs and more wealthy and in some respects mightier than any of the great ones who built here.

First we passed under the propylon with the winged sun-disk on the lintel erected by Ptolemy III, and went into the small temple of Khonsu, the third person of the Theban Trinity, who is the god of young men and maidens, who has power over evil spirits, and also possesses god-like power over the ills of men. I believe it was the image of Khonsu which was taken to Syria to heal the daughter of one of its kings. I like one of the names given to Khonsu: "The beautiful one at rest." This temple to Khonsu is built in the usual style of Egyptian temples, forecourt, hypostyle hall, hall of the sanctuary, and finally the holy of holies itself. It contains the red granite shrine of the moon-god, dating from the time of Amenophis II, which was incorporated in the present building by Pharaohs of a later date, but it is broken now.

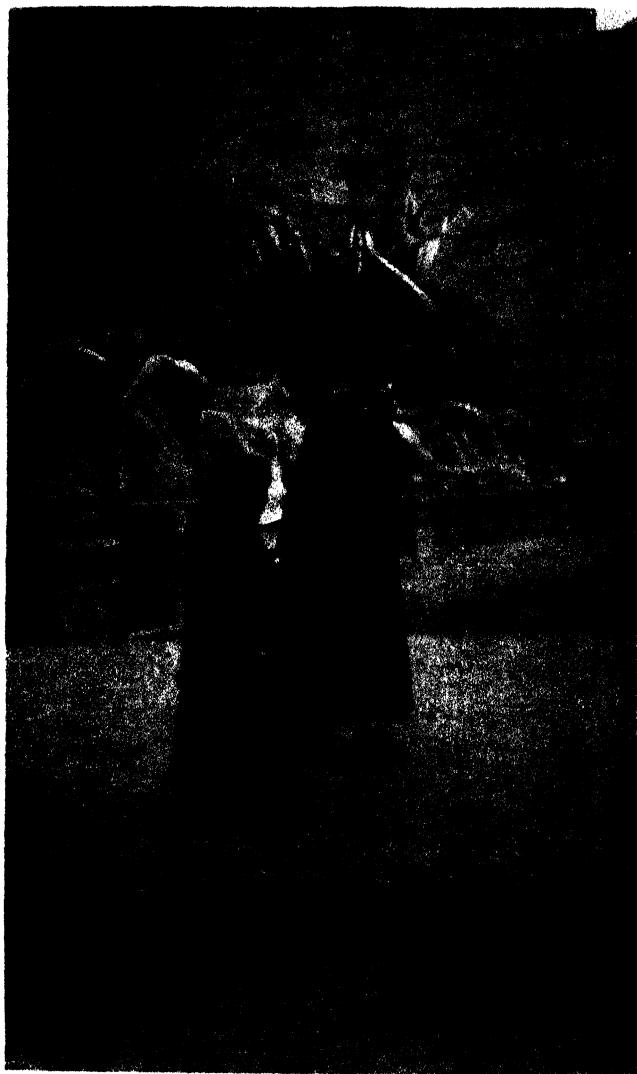
Just for amusement I have been counting the number of Pharaohs whose cartouches learned men have recognised in different parts of the building. Rameses III built the present temple, which remains to this day, but stones and carvings from earlier and later days are found here and

there. Rameses XI, 1100 B.C., Nectanebis I, about 400 B.C., Amenophis II, Thothmes III and Amenophis III, all within the fifteenth century B.C., and Rameses III, twelfth century B.C., jostle the Emperor Augustus of the first century of the Christian era.

By a series of gymnastics we managed to get up into and down from the dark little temple of Osiris and Opet, the hippopotamus goddess, who in Thebes was regarded as the mother of the god-king Osiris. It is very dark, being lighted only by its own grated windows, so we were able to get an idea of the dimness in which a good part of the Egyptian worship took place.

Then we went on a little way across the sand, and came to the grand entrance of the temple of Amen Ra, flanked as it is by an avenue of ram-headed sphinxes, and we stood upon what is now called a terrace, but which was originally the river-side quay, to look at the entrance pylon built by the king of the Ethiopian dynasty who ruled in Egypt in the eighth century B.C.

We were told that the whole of the area within the temenos wall of mud brick was roughly sixty-two acres, and that about ten of the great cathedrals of Europe could be built within it and still there would be room. My head never could hold figures, so I didn't listen to any more but tried to renew my acquaintance with the great temple itself.



Native Women and Ram-headed Sphinxes
at the Entrance to the Temple of Amen at Karnak

Through the first pylon I entered the great forecourt, with the three shrines to the Trinity of Thebes erected by Seti I in the left-hand corner. At one period of its history ten huge columns, five a side, with open-flower capitals led the way to the second pylon. Only one of these columns now stands and it has been re-erected for modern eyes to marvel at, at tremendous expense. On the right, opening out of this forecourt, is the perfect little temple of Rameses III, perfect in form, with its statues of the King as Osiris round the court, with its inclined plane leading into the vestibule of Sekhmet, with its doorway leading into the dark Hypostyle Hall, its roof remaining, and thence into the chapels of the Theban triad.

It is obvious from the position of this temple that the great temple of Amen Ra ended at what is now the second pylon and that the forecourt was added much later.

We now enter the temple itself through this pylon, which dates from the time of Rameses I, into the famous Hypostyle Hall. I am going to put down the figures, hoping they will stay in my memory—"134 columns in 16 rows, 75 feet high and 30 feet in circumference." It is a hall of columns; some with open-flower capitals form the centre aisle, on any one of which it is said there is room for one hundred men to stand; others are of the closed-bud capitals, and all of them were originally painted in reds, blues, yellows and greens,

and represent the Pharaoh entering the presence of the gods. There was a clerestory above the roofs of the aisles filled with stone gratings through which the sunlight filtered, thereby giving enough light for the religious procession which entered on its way to the holy of holies, without taking from the mysterious darkness conducive to the soul at prayer.

On the walls, both inside and out, are graven pictures of the worship as well as the fightings of the Pharaohs Seti I and his son, Rameses II.

After re-entering the Hypostyle we passed out through the third pylon and came to the older part of the temple, a pylon of Amenophis III. In front of the temple as he knew it there was a court facing the pylon built by Thothmes III, with two obelisks of red granite erected by his father. One of them is still standing, the second has disappeared. Behind another pylon there is another ruined court in which two other great red granite obelisks were brought from Assouan and erected here by Senmut the Architect at the command of Queen Hatasu.

And then we entered what was once a hall but into which Thothmes III had built a couple of shrines. In front of one of them there is a huge seated statue of Amenophis II, very kingly and majestic, one more pylon—if my memory serves me well there are six pylons from west to east in this mighty temple—and we passed through a

granite gateway, noticing two beautiful granite pillars, one with a papyrus in relief, and the other with a lotus on it, which once supported the roof of the Hall of Records.

And now for an intrusion.

Into the midst of antiquity, the oldest part of the great temple, Philip Arrhidæus, who in the fourth century B.C. included Egypt within the bounds of his empire, placed a granite shrine on which he is shown crowned and presented to the gods.

There are several odd chambers here. We went into one of them to see some reliefs of Queen Hatasu which have kept their colour extraordinarily well.

We walked through the shrine and came into another open court—I didn't think very much about it, as I knew that facing us was the famous Hall of Festival, built by Thothmes III, but I was sorry afterwards, for I read in Dr. Baikie's book on *Egyptian Antiquities of the Nile Valley* that a Middle Kingdom temple once stood here, a thousand years before Thothmes laid the foundations of his great House of the Gods.

This Hall of Festival is interesting from an architectural point of view, because it gives an example of a type of building which apparently did not meet with the royal approval, namely the idea of representing the royal tent in stone. Beyond, again, there are several small chambers,

more or less ruined. In one of them was found the Karnak Table of Kings which was removed to Paris in 1843, and exquisite carvings on the walls of another, of the fruit, flowers, birds and cattle which Thothmes III brought home from one of his distant campaigns.

This is the eastern end of the main building, but within the sacred area both to the north and to the south there are other temples which deserve a visit.

On our way southwards to the temple of Mut, the divine consort of great Amen, we passed through four ruined pylons built at different times by different Pharaohs, forming what might almost be called a series of state entries to the chief temple, leaving on our left the sacred lake whereon the golden boat of Amen once floated. Now it lies deserted, except for many kinds of birds which find sanctuary in the rough reeds surrounding it.

Close by, we had an interesting experience. Moussa, the famous snake-charmer of Luxor and the district, came here to exhibit his skill. A party of us stood and watched. Among the heaps of ruins and rough grass he crouched, humming a weird chant ; suddenly he made a dart and lifted up a scorpion from among the stones. Afterwards he drew a long grass snake to him. Personally, I didn't feel very happy in the thought that these reptiles had been lying at ease so close to us. I

felt still less so when, after further crooning, a cobra lifted its head and wriggled towards him : Moussa spoke some charm and the cobra stayed motionless, hooded head erect. Moussa stretched out his hand, grasped it and put it into a round wicker basket to which the scorpion and the snake had been consigned already.

Naturally there was a great deal of discussion as to Moussa's powers, but in the opinion of most people and according to his previous records, he was adjudged to have the strange magnetic gift and sense of smell of a bona fide snake-charmer.

After this digression we continued our way to the temple of Mut. There is little to see, for ruthless destruction was its fate at the hands of Akhenaton. Several interesting statues were found buried here, among them two crouching statues of Senmut and Bekenkhons, the famous architects of Hatasu and Rameses II. Two figures of the god Bes stand on either side of the gateway.

We had seen the hideous dwarf last at Dendera, as the patron saint of babies ; here he is standing at the entrance to the temple of the mother-goddess Mut, who is also identified with Hathor the Beautiful. But sad to relate, Mut is also linked with the lioness-headed Sekhmet, and as such has a reputation for fierceness and cruelty. To-day, the situation of the temple is still beautiful, with the palm trees close at hand and the cultivated fields near by, but it must have been still more

THE GLAMOUR OF EGYPT

beautiful when its painted buildings rose into the cloudless sky, and were surrounded on three sides by the clear waters of its crescent-shaped lake.

I tried to leave the temple of Mut with an impression of beauty in my mind, but I shall never be able to forget the circle of granite statues of Sekhmet in the central court, seated with hands on knees, blind eyes gazing out from lioness heads, black, grim, silent and aloof.

Once more we retraced our steps, through the ruined pylons, through the shadowed stillness of the wonderful Hall of Columns, from south to north, out into the sunshine again and by an ancient paved path came to a small temple dedicated to Ptah and Hathor. Through five arches or gateways we passed, three of which bore the cartouches of the Ptolemies, second century B.C., while the other two, which are sandwiched between those of Ptolemaic times, are marked with the cartouche of Queen Hatasu and are thus some one thousand two hundred years older. In the sanctuary itself is a headless statue of the creator-god, Ptah of Memphis, the father of the gods, and in a chamber to the right of it is the famous black granite statue of Sekhmet, which is supposed to possess untold power of evil even up to the present day ! If the fact of being black and of being placed in utter darkness aids these powers, Sekhmet certainly has all the necessary attributes in this little shrine at Karnak.

Beyond the temenos wall of mud brick, beyond the eastern gate, we went to see the place where the gigantic statues of Akhenaton, now in the Cairo Museum, were found when the vast system for the drainage of the whole temple area was undertaken. There is little hope at present of any further excavation bringing to light much of interest concerning the heretic king, although it is known that he built a great temple to the Aton outside this wall of the sacred enclosure.

What strange things dreams are! Sometimes they are absolutely inconsequent, sometimes they really seem to be the outcome of events which have taken place during the preceding day.

The night before last I dreamt that the telephone bell rang. Mother answered it and then called out to me saying: "Mr. Rheumatism wants to know if you will marry him!" To which I replied quite calmly, "What a nuisance!" and Mother answered: "Do hurry up, you can't keep the poor man waiting on the telephone all day long."

Could there have been anything more idiotic than such a dream? Now last night I had one which was really delightful, and helpful too, following on my visits to the temples at Luxor and Karnak.

I have told you what I heard and saw with these ears and eyes when awake, and now I will tell you what I remember of my spirit visit with two men

of long ago. I suppose I had gone to bed with the curious-sounding names Senmut and Bekenkhons, the architects, in my mind, for this is what I dreamt.

I was standing alone outside the pylon of Luxor Temple in the moonlight, looking up at the huge standing figure of Rameses II, when I was joined by two men, both in white garments, but each had hanging from the band which encircled his waist a measure, a pair of compasses and a long pointed case containing several coloured pencils.

They both bowed low, one saying: "I am Bekenkhons, the architect of the great King Rameses II," and the other, who looked a little bewildered: "My name is Senmut, architect of all the works of Queen Hatasu here as elsewhere, but I can find nothing that I can remember."

Bekenkhons, stepping a little in front, said cheerfully: "Never mind. Come with us through the temple and let me point out what I placed here, and the buildings which were here before; when we get to Karnak you will be able to tell us of your memories."

Bekenkhons seemed a very dominating person. "Like master, like man," I said to myself as Senmut and I made to follow him.

"Stay," he said majestically, pointing to the one obelisk. "I erected two obelisks of granite, whose beauty approached heaven. I made very great double doors of electron; I hewed very

great flagstaffs and I erected them in front of Rameses' temple. But of the obelisks only one remains, the doors and the flagstaffs are gone, although you can still see the grooves."

He seemed rather sad, so I said: "But there are the great figures of the Pharaoh." A snort of annoyance greeted my words.

"I placed six figures of my King, two sitting at rest, and one on either side of the gateway, ready to lead the procession to Karnak. Now there are only three, and they are broken and defaced. You must come this way now," and he led us round into the forecourt where I had seen the granite figures of Rameses coming out from the spaces between the columns, saying as he went: "These outside walls were once gay with colour, for on them were painted scenes from my lord's wars, and here is the Queen Nefertiti," he said, touching a little figure sculptured to suggest her confidence in her husband's protection.

He looked piercingly at me. "This was the beginning of the temple when I first came," he said, "and very beautiful it was with this great colonnade leading into the forecourt of the old temple—but it was not big enough to please my Pharaoh. Of course, I remember it all quite well"—and then turning to the trembling old man beside me, he said kindly: "I can show you something which will remind you of the days you spent at Deir-el-Bahari."

We walked across the open square of the fore-court with the lovely bud capitals flanking it on every side, making them look like folded lilies in the moonlight, and went into the Birth-chamber of Amenophis, where the afternoon before a crowd of tourists had laughed and scoffed.

All was silent now, as we three stood gazing at the scenes pictured on the walls, so intelligible to the men of those long-ago centuries, so difficult for us to take seriously.

"Ah ! Who did that ? " hoarsely asked Senmut. " That is stolen from my Queen's temple in the western hills."

"No, not stolen. The Pharaoh Amenophis III sought to claim parentage from the same great god as Queen Hatasu, that in so doing he might win the approval and protection of the priests of Amen at Thebes."

That settled the matter, at any rate for these two, and turning, I said to Bekenkhons: "I wonder if you two will let me go with you to Karnak ; I think you suggested going ? "

"Yes, lady ; we came to take you." So saying he led the way out of the temple, through the lovely gardens which surrounded it, and along a road bordered with ram-headed sphinxes, until we came to the great pylon at the entrance to the temple of Amen.

"None of this was here in my time," he said in a lordly fashion, rapidly passing through into the

Hypostyle Hall. He stopped before some of the pillars on which the moonlight shone.

"I have heard," he said, turning to me, "that strangers from many parts come to gaze at the pictures on these columns." I was rather amused; it was so typical of him that the paintings on the great columns should be the only thing that attracted sightseers, and then he went on: "But the colour is fading and my Pharaoh and the gods will soon be lost to the sight of men. Come and look at the outside walls of this court, on the south side." Proudly he pointed to the mighty Pharaoh leading his Hittite captives into the presence of the god Amen, and to another, which I had not noticed before, showing great quantities of loot also being brought to receive the benediction of the god.

"Rameses, your King, does not seem to have built much here," I said.

He replied: "Fifty-four of the columns in the Hypostyle he set up and had them together with the eighty which already stood there adorned and decorated. The Ramesseum on the western bank of the river, the Rock Temple at Abou Simbel, which he built to commemorate his victory over the Kheta, of which Pentaur sings, there," and he pointed to an inscription on the wall, "are his greatest memorials."

While we had been talking Senmut had wandered away, but when Bekenkhons' voice sank into a whisper, he came quietly out of the dim Hall of

Columns and beckoned us both to follow. The domineering architect of Rameses II having finished his "showing," Senmut led the way through the central court and came to a standstill between the fourth and fifth pylons.

"The temple of Amen was smaller in my day," he said. "I did not know where I was until I came here," and he touched the red granite obelisk, which I knew belonged to Queen Hatasu, lovingly. "It was different when I first knew it, and is sadly different now."

"How was it different when you first saw it?" I asked, thinking to help him.

"I came at the command of my Queen into this hall, which had been built and roofed with cedar by Thothmes I, and also had cedar-wood columns. Around the walls were statues of the King as Osiris.

"It was very beautiful, but my Queen had a dislike for it, as being the place where the priests of Amen had compelled her to acknowledge the prince who later reigned with her under the name of Thothmes III. I can see her face dark with hatred for these men and she commissioned me to raise the two mighty obelisks, which I had brought down with much skill and difficulty from Assouan, here."

"But what happened to the roof of gilded cedar-wood?" I asked.

Rather shamefacedly, I thought, he replied :

"What the Queen commanded must be obeyed. The roof was broken and the obelisks placed in the court. This is one of them, the other has fallen, you cannot read the sacred writing of Egypt, I know, so I will tell you something of what is written here."

"How clearly cut it is!" I said.

"Yes. Queen Hatasu's wish that 'all shall see my monument in after years and admire my work' was fulfilled, but it was fulfilled through spite, for the hated Thothmes had no love for his royal sister and gave orders that these obelisks should be cased with masonry so that none might read what had been inscribed here, and it is through having been protected during four thousand years that it is clear to-day."

"Will you read me some of what is written here?" I asked.

"She tells how one day, when sitting in her palace, and thinking of her creator, her heart led her to make two obelisks of electron whose points mingled with heaven, and then she says, 'I have done this from a loving heart for my father Amen. I did it under his command, it was he who led me.'"

"Thank you very much, both of you," I said.

"Come with us, just a little way towards the south," said old Senmut, and we three turned to go out of the court, and by a way which I did not recognise he led me into the open, past the

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colossal granite scarab symbol of endless life, and I saw that we were near the sacred lake.

“ Look, look ! ” said Bekenkhons and Senmut together. There, on the calm waters of the lake, which lay white in the light of the moon, I saw, as it is said men throughout the ages have seen, the golden barque of Amen, the god of Thebes and of the Sun.

A rap on the door of my cabin awoke me.

Yours, ——

IX

MADAMUD

My Dear,

This is a letter about bulls and birds. The symbol of war and the symbol of peace !

To-day we set off for the temple of Madamud, the site of which lies a few miles north-east of Karnak.

We two drove in a victoria, with two good horses, the coachman having his head tied up in a huge white handkerchief.

We went by the road leading from Luxor to Karnak, and drove on through a long stretch of cultivated fields green with growing barley, beans and vetch, irrigated by canals and channels from the life-giving waters of the Nile.

Remember, I am only speaking of crops when I use the word life-giving !

As we drove along that sandy road bordered with palm trees there was a sound of mourning and weeping, and we met a crowd of black-robed women rushing madly along, waving their arms and some shrieking, while others sang a weird

moan of lament. Apparently the husband of one or perhaps more than one of them had died that morning in hospital, and this was their means of spreading the sad tidings.

We went and came back from Madamud the same way, so I will talk about the bull first, and upon birds on the way back.

After driving for some distance beside one of the canals, the Jehu stopped and we descended. We were led by means of intricate paths through the fields by a small dark boy clad in the inevitable one garment, until we came to the mud walls surrounding the village of Madamud. By the way, I am not sure if the name of the village to-day is Madamud, or if that was its name when the temple was built there and dedicated to the war-god Montu in the Twelfth Dynasty, a little later probably than Mentuhotep built his mortuary temple at Deir-el-Bahari. We were glad to see the ruins, because they have only been excavated within the last few years and excavations are still going on.

Passing through the rather dirty little village, braving a plague of flies and dozens of children, we reached the site of what had once been an important sacred area. Natives under the supervision of French archæologists were engaged in the Herculean task of digging out and removing great blocks of sandstone, belonging to the earliest temple, about 2000 B.C., which the Ptolemies had used for the foundations of the temple built by



Excavations at Madamud

them, part of which is still standing, and which was added to and extended by the Romans during their occupation of this land.

We had seen some lintels from the gateway of the original temple which commemorated the jubilee of Senusret III, and also a fine head in dark granite of this great Pharaoh in the Cairo Museum.

Most of the warrior kings of Egypt seem to have had a special regard for this sanctuary of the war-god, for it is known that Amenophis II, Seti I and Rameses II each built here and adorned it as they thought fitting, and later the Ptolemies and the Roman Emperors Tiberius and Antoninus Pius set up pylons, monumental gateways and a colonnaded court, of which some of the columns, with beautifully carved capitals, are standing to-day.

We stayed watching strings of boys and girls, who, in orderly rows, filled wide baskets with sand which had been dug out of the ruins, carried them on their heads and emptied them, singing a monotonous song all the time they were working. An overseer stood by cracking a whip and seeing that no time was wasted during working hours.

The war-god Montu was represented by a sacred animal, "Bakh," "the strong bull," who, like Apis at Memphis, had certain characteristics: "Long hair which grew backwards, while he himself changed colour every hour."

I asked a Hampshire farmer if he could oblige

me by procuring such a beast. You can imagine what he thought of me—worse than a March hare.

It is said that a small separate temple once stood close to the large one, within which this weird god lived and wherein he was worshipped.

So much for the Bull of War ; now for the Birds of Peace although personally I think birds are much more disagreeable and bullying to one another than animals. They so often seem to have squabbles between themselves in which feathers fly and dust is scattered.

On our way back from Madamud we took careful notice of the birds which flew past or which we passed on our way along the canal bank.

There were little bright green birds with long beaks called “ bee-eaters,” who not only catch bees in the air but follow them into the heart of the flowers. Standing in the muddy water of the canal were tall white, black and grey birds on slender legs whose name I don't know, dainty white egrets strutted in the fields, and overhead grey-backed crows flew hither and thither.

Now I promised I would tell you another legend about birds one of these days, so, as I have a little extra time for writing, I will put one into this letter. I read it in a book on *Birds of Egypt*, and the reference given was Curzon's *Monasteries of the Levant*.

This one is about the crested hoopoe, which we see everywhere in Egypt. It is a lovely little bird ;

its head, neck and breast are pale cinnamon in colour, its wings and tail barred with black and white, and on its head is a gorgeous crest of orange-red tipped with black.

Once upon a time there was a King of Egypt who was importing a bride from Asia, and gave orders that she was to be met by all the birds of the air, who were to spread their wings and form a sunshade for her, while they sang songs in order to make the journey pass more quickly. All agreed except the hoopoe, who objected, because he knew something about the lady, and so he went into the desert. The King sent for him, asking for his reason. The hoopoe replied that he had grave objections to the lady, and withal so well fought his case that the King, amazed at his courage, took off his crown, saying : " Truly thou art a very king among birds and shall be crowned for ever."

Now it is told how the hoopoe went home to consult his spouse as to what the royal crown should be. She, like all women, said : " Let us wear golden crowns for ever."

But tragedy followed the granting of that request. One man, one day, put a broken mirror in the snare. The Queen Hoopoe immediately went and looked at herself, and later, whenever a hoopoe strutted about, he was snared. At last not a hoopoe dared to show his head. In desperation the King of the Hoopoes went back to the King and told him of their sorry plight. " Did not I warn

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thee of thy folly in desiring crowns of gold? " he said. " However, as a memorial of thy service to me, the crowns of gold shall be changed to crowns of feather that thou mayest walk unharmed amongst the sons of men."

So, my young nieces, be careful and remember that fine feathers do not always make happy birds.

Your old Aunt.

X

LUXOR AND DEIR-EL-BAHARI

My Dear,

Here is one of my "little" letters, by which I mean a letter filled with trivialities.

My mind to-day is not big enough to describe the wonders of Karnak, neither am I in an exalted enough frame of mind to discourse on a general outline of the religion of Amen Ra as shown in the Temple of Luxor, nor on the belief of the Eighteenth Dynasty Pharaohs and their courtiers, in the other life as seen in the deep tombs in the silent valley, or in the smaller "spirit-houses" of the nobles honeycombed in the hills above the fields which border the river.

So I am going to tell you of odds and ends.

There was a man of Luxor from whom a year ago I had bought a fly-whisk. To-day we were walking along the dusty road outside his shop and I unwittingly let my fly-whisk fall. In a second he recognised me, pounced upon the fly-whisk, and besought us to come inside his shop while he washed it and put a new ribbon on the handle for me.

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We had a most amusing quarter of an hour while he was doing so, for all the time he was singing loudly in English, " Home, Sweet Home," mixed up with " Over the Hills and Far Away."

Then he proceeded to show us his wares, among them a string of amber which he solemnly informed us was eighteen thousand years old ! However, we bought a string of what he called " infused amber " for twenty piastres, roughly four shillings, thereby earning his eternal gratitude, for trade had been bad.

He then dabbed our hands and dresses with jasmine perfume from a little essence bottle made of amber, seeming not at all perturbed when we said we had no wish to buy it.

Looking round the little shop, dignified by the name of " store " as a compliment to Americans, we saw and purchased a pretty bird brooch. This called for more baksheesh from him in the form of tiny bone elephants and awful scarabs, and an invitation to go to his house for coffee with his wife !

The word " scarab " has reminded me of another interesting morning we spent with Boulos, who had formerly been Cook's chief dragoman on the *Thebes*, the boat which goes from Shellal to Wady Halfa.

He has retired now and has a shop close to the Winter Palace Hotel. We had heard this and went in to see him. He had a number of good scarabs

for sale and told us several of the uses of the scarab in ancient days.

They were first used only on mummies as a symbol of immortality. The winged scarab, representing the giving of life, was placed over the heart of the dead person. Then they were used as amulets, i.e. protection against illness, all forms of bad luck, and against evil spirits.

Sometimes they were given or sent as greetings between friends. I had one given me as a birthday card this year. A real one, dating from the reign of Thothmes III, the brother of Queen Hatasu, who lived about 1500 B.C. ; the hieroglyphics meaning on it: " May you have happiness and life for ever and ever."

Greetings reminds me that the other day was the end of the Fast of Ramadan, " like your Christmas ! " explained one of the black boys to me, and therefore a general holiday in Moslem countries, so for two or three days Luxor was *en fête* ; everyone was dressed in his best !

One little scrap of a girl entertained us very much. She was walking along the promenade beside the river, the delight of all beholders, especially of her proud father, clad in a long primrose-coloured satin dress on which were stitched bands of rose-pink satin, a little green cap covered her woolly black hair, her legs and feet were enclosed in coarse grey woollen socks and thick black boots !

THE GLAMOUR OF EGYPT

Along this same promenade we saw a cart packed with long bars of ice upon which cold seat the driver was perched.

He was probably taking his load to one of the hotels. I hoped it would be used only for freezing purposes and not for iced drinks ! Needless to say I did not point him out to my American friends.

I saw another quaint thing the other day. A small grubby urchin went to the rear of a camel, and taking hold of its tail proceeded to brush his neck and face vigorously with it. This was apparently his only toilet. Thereby I learnt a new meaning for "a camel's-hair brush."

And none of these things were done for our amusement, but the things which were we did not think funny.

There was an Indian who insisted on digging hat-pins through his cheeks, pinning his eyelids together with brooches and safety pins, and binding himself with cords from which he freed himself, and under the veranda where we had luncheon at Deir-el-Bahari beneath Queen Hatasu's beautiful terraced temple, a man produced poor little frightened chicks of a day old out of his various pockets by calling "Galli—Galli," and performed other tricks of sleight of hand with cards and Egyptian notes which he borrowed from members of the party.

Talking of Deir-el-Bahari, it is interesting to note that the name, meaning "The Northern

Monastery," dates from the seventh century A.D., when Christian monks altered and lived in the temple of the beautiful queen. Hatasu, or Hatshepsut, by which name she is generally known, had called her temple "The Holy of Holies," to distinguish it from a temple more ancient still, which for years before had been named by men "The Holy."

It was to this older temple, built by kings of the Eleventh Dynasty, four of whom rejoiced in the name of Mentuhotep and who lived about 2200 B.C., that we strayed the last time we went to Deir-el-Bahari.

I will try to picture what it had looked like once and then will tell you what is to be seen to-day.

First, a garden of flowers and trees encircled the temple, except for the barrier wall of desert hills which divided it from the Valley of the Kings. An avenue of coloured statues of Osiris bordered the way up to the temple, which was built in terrace form—two rows of square columns on one level, and above them another double row. A narrow corridor led to a triple row of beautiful eight-sided pillars which surrounded the pyramid beneath which Mentuhotep II, a king of the Eleventh Dynasty, slept. The shrines of six ladies of the harem, who were buried immediately beneath the paved court, were placed behind the pyramid.

Still farther back, touching the western hills, there was another great pillared court, and from it an underground passage led to the tomb of Mentuhotep III, who was buried in a rock-hewn chamber lined with granite.

In the year 2250 B.C., at sunrise, at high noon, and in the glow of sunset, this brilliantly painted temple, set in fair gardens, with the red desert hills as a background, must have seemed a fitting place to which gods and kings might return at will. And in the year 1934 of the Christian era—two seated figures still guard the entrance of the avenue, but they are headless now. Many swathed figures of Osiris still line the way to the temple, but no longer do they stand erect ; headless, they lie prostrate on the sand.

At regular intervals on the hard desert, little circles show where men have dug and found, fossilised, the roots of those trees which were planted in this garden four thousand years ago.

Headless statues, trunkless trees and broken pillars, lying on terraces one above the other.

The pyramid is level with the pavement, and in the court an opening yawns showing where the burial shaft had been driven.

It was a brilliant day with hot sunshine, so that the tragedy of this ruin did not cast the shadow which it would have done if we had seen it under grey Northern skies ; at the same time it did give the idea of old age without hope of renewal, and

we were glad to feel once more the exhilaration of the young queen who claimed the throne by divine right, through being the divinely born daughter of Amen Ra.

On second thoughts, perhaps I am wrong, for it was from this old temple that Senmut, Hatasu's great architect, gained the inspiration which resulted in that wonderful painted stairway reaching from the plain to the hills up which the Ka of the queen led her on her journey to the celestial garden, as a reward for the garden she had made here in Thebes for Amen.

Papyrus and palm trees had been planted here in front of the first of the white-pillared terraces which rise one above the other until the great granite gateway leading to the sanctuary is reached.

Beneath the shrine in this sanctuary, Hatasu hoped to lie, but bad rock was encountered and so her wish was not attained.

The interest of the whole temple lies in the pictures on the walls of the terraces behind the pillars.

One day we spent a long time looking at their fading beauty. You can still see, but very faintly now, the Queen's expedition setting out for the land of Punt, the Somaliland of to-day, its welcome on arrival by the governor and his deformed wife, its return from "God's land" bringing strange animals, panthers and giraffes, and incense trees

for the worship of Amen. You can see the sailors carrying the trees to the boat with their roots done up in bundles of earth, just as we should send trees by rail to-day.

And later the offering of the trees to Amen and the blessing of the Queen by the god.

Hatasu proudly says in one of the inscriptions that this expedition was undertaken at the instance of divine inspiration, " a command was heard from the great throne," which accounts for the divine blessing bestowed upon its success, and yet her god allowed her cartouches and her form to be erased and defaced by the jealousy and hatred of her successor, Thothmes III.

It was between these two temples, the old and the new, that the shrine containing the statue of Hathor as a cow, said to be one of the finest pieces of animal sculpture in the world, was found. It is now in one of the rooms on the ground floor of the Cairo Museum : there Hathor stands at the door of her shrine, Thothmes III, a small figure, is shown drawing nourishment from his patron goddess, and then fate has stepped in, for instead of the cartouche of Thothmes appearing on the kingly figure in front, it is that of his son Amenophis II! What cheats they were in those old days.

Yours, ——

XI

EXTRACT FROM DIARY : VALLEY OF THE KINGS

Sunset at Rome and at Luxor—alike and yet how different !

I can see a Roman sunset now, if I shut my eyes, as I have often seen it from the top of the Spanish steps.

Beneath, the great modern city with the noise of its hurrying, busy population ; the sun sinking a golden globe behind the Janiculum, where a long line of stone pines stand as sentinels to keep guard over the city, and around me countless swallows dart hither and thither, speeding high and sweeping low, restless and void of calm. " It may be they are the souls of pagan Romans who died before Christianity was born "—I say to myself once more.

Then, as the Angelus peals from countless domes beneath which sleep the holy dead, a gracious stillness falls. Peace has descended upon unquiet souls, and the light of the afterglow, red, blue and green, encircles the city with the rainbow of hope. And here am I at Luxor, seated on a bench

beneath a mimosa tree, fragrant with golden balls, the yellow Nile at my feet. The sun is setting behind the red hills beyond in a golden radiance. Birds with wide-spreading wings soar overhead, little ones skim the water. No Angelus bells bring peace to them.

A white mist rises from the plain across the river, shrouding the distant hills. A hush falls, and dark silence. I wonder why those birds, those big ones, with the spreading wings, are waiting—waiting——

“What are you doing dreaming here when the mist is rising, and the sun has set? Come in at once or you will take cold and be unable to go with us to-morrow—to the Tombs of the Kings.”

A touch on my shoulder awakened me and I said drowsily—“To-morrow? But I have been there already—I have just come back.”

“Hurry up and come indoors. There is the gong. It is time to dress for dinner,” was all the answer I got. “You can write up your diary later.”

“But you must listen to me,” I said slowly, following my disturber into the hotel.

I must jot down what happened at sunset this evening before I forget it.

Those birds were waiting for me! and before I knew or understood what was happening I found myself, or so it seemed to me, flying like a bird, swiftly following them across the silent river, and

through a mist which slowly parted, showing a white road, winding into the hills which lay dark before us. There was a bend, the road narrowed and we were within the valley where, folded away in the hills, hidden from the eyes of men, once slept the mighty dead.

There were six birds, I making the seventh. It didn't seem at all a wonder to me, so I am going to write down what I saw as if I had been taken round in a party by a dumb dragoman.

There was a strange radiance as I followed one of these birds into a tomb, over which was the name of Rameses IX, so that I was able to see the inscriptions and painting on the walls very clearly. The first thing I noticed, chiefly because my shadowy guide paused, was that on the left wall at the entrance was painted the king making offerings to Amen-Ra-Harakte, god of the Dawn, and to Mertseger, "The Lover of Silence." Thus I learnt that silence was to be the watchword for all the experiences which followed. On the other wall the king was holding a little figure of himself as an oblation and a plea for mercy. Slowly I followed down through two corridors and saw pictured on the walls of one of them the heart of Pharaoh being weighed against the feather of Truth, until, passing through a four-pillared hall into a sloping passage, I reached the empty burial-chamber.

The vaulted roof is painted blue and spangled

with gold stars ; two figures of Nut, the goddess of the sky, by day and night bend over the space where, I guessed, once stood the sarcophagus of the Pharaoh. The bird which I had followed rose from the white sand of the floor and disappeared among the stars.*

Immediately I found myself outside the tomb in the sleepy hollow again, where the other birds were still waiting. One soared into the air and I followed quietly and without effort. We flew towards the highest point of the hills, which, dominating the valley, rises like a natural pyramid into the clear night sky. We swerved westwards, and then dropped suddenly and alighted on the top of a flight of steps which led into a sloping corridor, on which is painted a plan of the tomb, showing the royal sarcophagus being slid down into its final resting-place. But to ensure its safety this old king, whose name, Amenophis II, I had seen outside, had evidently had a false shaft sunk in order to mislead thieves. The tomb was sunk very

* The Egyptians believed that man possessed a body, a heart-soul Ba, which is represented in hieroglyphic by a bird, long of beak and long of leg, a spirit-soul, Ka, also represented by a long-legged, long-beaked bird. There are other parts as well, but the bird is sufficient to explain the meaning of the dream. I imagine the reason that some of the Ba-birds flew away was because there was nothing left which had ever been connected with the dead Pharaohs. Where the sarcophagus was still in the tomb, the heart-soul remained.

deep and the air was quite lifeless. The burial-hall has six pillars and its walls are covered with scenes and texts from the book "of that which is in the Underworld," the knowledge of which is vital to the dead.

At the far end, on a lower level than the hall itself, I saw the great sarcophagus in which I knew, for I had seen him there, the great king had once slept. I heard a gentle fluttering and saw the bird who had led me here spread his wings over the stone coffin—and remain there motionless.

Once more I stood outside, another bird hovered over me and, flying low, led me to another tomb close by—over which I saw "Haremheb," so knew that I was going to see the tomb of the Pharaoh who was thought to have built the beautiful flower-pillars at Luxor, the soldier who had seized the throne of Pharaoh and brought law and order to a distracted land.

This tomb, too, is dug very deep. Half-way down the long corridor, divided by a flight of steep steps, is a two-pillared hall, built to deceive robbers, who rarely were deceived. The paintings on the walls show bright-coloured, large-sized figures of animal- and bird-headed gods and goddesses, together with the Jackal Guide, all guarding and leading the King to the land of the Eternal Sun-god. Down another slope I followed, noticing the red-painted figure of the King before the gods, and especially before Osiris, who is painted green

of face, perhaps symbolising new life. Beneath again, in a square room, stands the square red granite sarcophagus with the outspread wings of Nephthys at each corner.

Resting on the sarcophagus is the granite lid. In the tomb chamber the figures carved on the walls are in outline only, black and red, so apparently Death had called Haremheb too soon. Once more I left my guide in the empty chamber of the King. This time, I made the fourth as I came up into the still light of early evening, for I found the other three birds had followed me to the tomb of Haremheb. One separated himself from the others, so I knew that him I had to follow. I remember I always looked carefully at the name written on the small slabs of stone over the entrance door, because, of course, all was silence.

This time, we went by a straight flight across the valley and stayed before a deep hollowed tomb with the name Seti I above it. At first I thought it rather dull, for there seemed to be nothing but hieroglyphics on the wall, which I was unable to read. Down, down, down, I seemed to be dropping, and then I saw on the wall the sun-boat being towed by seven gods and seven goddesses—and always on the walls as I descended the boat kept pace with me. So I gathered that it showed the soul of the Pharaoh on its journey to the other world after having triumphantly passed the Judgment of Osiris. Then the Ba-bird and I

came to a four-pillared hall, beautifully painted, out of which another opens which apparently had never been finished.

My guide hastened me on down two other corridors, on the walls of which are painted the ceremony of the opening of the mouth of the mummy, and also small statues of the King standing on pedestals. I almost broke silence by saying : " I have seen real statues like that in the Cairo Museum," but refrained. Finally we entered the third pillared court, again full of colour, which is the burial-hall itself. On the walls the King is shown being welcomed to the companionship of the gods, amid the unchanging glory of a never-ending day. I looked up at the vaulted ceiling, ablaze with stars, and in the strange radiance which was around me I saw the wide wings of Maet, the goddess of Truth, outspread to protect the mummy of the King from all evil. But all had been in vain. The lower part of the hall was bare and I found myself alone. My bird had vanished.

Two of my companions had winged their way " elsewhere," two I had left within the ancient tombs, and two more I found still waiting for me. They both flew before me into the more open part of the valley, one seemed to hesitate, while the other flew on unerringly towards another doorway in the hill-side. Meneptah was the name over this. There was a fine relief of Meneptah before Harakte, both beautifully coloured. After that the long

white corridors are merely books on which are painted the black hieroglyphics of texts from the Litanies of Ra and the Book of the Gates which accompanied the sailing of the sun-god into the other world. I felt quite sorry for my bird guide when we came into the burial-hall, for it was so badly damaged, but he went towards the beautiful granite lid of the sarcophagus, on which was carved the figure of the Pharaoh as if asleep. I remembered having read that the god Ptah had appeared to Meneptah in a dream and had promised him victory over an army of invaders who had penetrated his kingdom as far as Heliopolis, and wondered if he had willed that the memory of this dream should last for ever. Again I was alone as I came out into the clear twilight.

The last sentinel waited, and I went down a flight of steps, over which No. 62, Tomb of Tutan-khamen, was printed ; and entered by a doorway into a corridor and by another doorway into an outer chamber which opened into the burial-hall itself.

It was bare of all its treasures ; in the centre stood the sarcophagus with the four guardian goddesses, Isis, Nephthys, Neith and Selqet, exquisitely carved at each corner with outstretched wings, "to keep" the King to all eternity. Within was a coffin, overlaid with thin sheet-gold in the form of the young King, with crook and scourge of Osiris in his folded arms, beneath which I knew lay

EXTRACT FROM DIARY : VALLEY OF THE KINGS

the mummy of Tutankhamen. Stripped of his jewels, his treasures, his furniture, even of his great golden coffin, this Pharaoh alone, of the Eighteenth Dynasty, rests in the tomb prepared for him.

I looked for the bird who had fluttered before me, and saw a dark shadow resting on the breast of the king-like form within the sarcophagus.

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“ What are you doing dreaming here? ” The voice and a touch awakened me.

XII

TEMPLE OF SETI I, KOURNAH ; RAMESSEUM, MEDINET HABU

Dears,

I have already told you of my dream when the sad Senmut and the excited Bekenkhons took me round the temples at Luxor and Karnak. I had another strange experience another day, call it a day-dream if you like, which I will let you read about from my diary when I get home.

That has made me lazy.

I wanted Bekenkhons to take me to the funerary temple of Kournah built by Seti I, and to the great Ramesseum of Rameses II: and I hoped that some of the Ba-birds of the nobles would visit their tombs with me, but neither the architect nor a heart-soul came, so I started off on successive days to the "other side" in a white-winged boat, accompanied by two elderly ladies, one of them provided with a little camp-stool and a very big book.

We drove along the river, where sugar-cane was growing, and on the edge of the desert turned

off across the sand by the road leading to the Valley of the Kings, and came to the gate of the temple enclosure of Kournah or El Qurna, as it is sometimes spelt. The pylons are destroyed, the great court a waste except for a colonnade of papyrus pillars which form the façade of the temple as it stands to-day.

The curious, the uninitiated, "the *populi*," can now enter without hindrance through the central door into the small hypostyle hall, which has six columns with bud capitals and is flanked on both sides by three small chambers.

Passing through the chancel, as we should call it, which is on a higher level, the sanctuary is reached where the base on which the sacred boat of Amen once rested is still standing.

Behind the sanctuary there is another pillared room with reliefs of Seti. The reliefs in this temple are beautiful, similar to those we had seen in the magnificent temple built by Seti in honour of Osiris at Abydos, so it may be that the same artists were carried up the Nile from Thebes to Abydos in State barges to execute the carvings there.

This temple built on the western plain, facing the mighty house of Amen at Karnak, was that to which the mummy of the Pharaoh would have been taken after the benediction of Osiris had been received at Abydos. Here the final ceremonies were performed before it was taken at dead of night,

by those sworn to secrecy, to the painted tomb awaiting it in the valley behind the hills.

It is thought that Seti built this mortuary temple in memory of his father, Rameses I, and that Rameses II re-dedicated it to the memory of his father, Seti, so that I suppose according to the belief in those days two Pharaohs must have returned to this temple to take part in the rites which were being performed in their honour and to their eternal well-being.

All that I could find of any interest referring to Rameses I was one small hall leading out of the hypostyle by which we had entered. It is called the Chapel of Rameses I, and has three sanctuaries opening out of it. On the walls of the chapel itself there is an interesting relief. It shows the devout grandson, Rameses II, kneeling before Amen Ra and receiving from him the symbol of Jubilee. Behind Rameses is the goddess Mut, his divine mother, and behind Amen Ra is the god of youth, Khonsu, and the deified Rameses.

Once more Rameses I appears, and that is in a relief in the middle sanctuary.

Here his son Seti is offering to the sacred barques, and Rameses, in Osiris form, is within a shrine over which Isis, as a hawk, spreads her wings.

On the north side of this temple is a large hall called to-day the Hall of Rameses II; I imagine because of the reliefs which show him

making offerings to the gods. It had ten columns once, but these have been destroyed.

This is the general outline of the temple itself, but there are one or two high reliefs characteristic of the art of the time of Seti which are beautiful as well as interesting.

On the rear wall of the hypostyle hall the Pharaoh Seti is shown receiving the symbol of life from both Montu, the god of war, and from Atum, the god of the setting sun, or "the Closer of the Day," as he was sometimes called, perhaps suggesting "after life's fitful fever may he sleep well"—and another which I think I should have mentioned first, for it shows life at its dawning. Seti is before Amen Ra, the Almighty, the self-existent one who has taken Thebes and the Empire under his protection, and Khnum, who moulds mankind upon his wheel; so Seti was blessed by the gods, both in the morning of life and at its eventide.

So much for Kournah. I dislike the name Mortuary Temple. It suggests the Morgue at Paris, the resting-place of suicides and the unclaimed dead, whereas these temples are raised to the memory of kings who claimed to be recognised and worshipped as gods. However, I haven't time for my own point of view, as I am trying to give you an idea of what these temples "of the Westerners," "those who had gone West," were like. We went next to what is called the Ramesseum, the

mortuary temple of Rameses II. Apparently it followed the plan of most Egyptian temples, having a pylon or gateway, a first court for the common people, a second pylon before a second court wherein the nobles might worship; then the hypostyle hall of the priests leading into the sanctuary, sacred to the presence of the King and the High Priest alone.

It was in this sanctuary that the mummy rested before the final ceremonies, and was for ever hallowed by the returning spirit.

But this great temple, like that of Kournah, is partly in ruins. The first pylon still stands half ruined, with its history of the Syrian campaign and of the mighty exploits of Rameses at Kadesh on the Orontes.

Rameses seems never to have tired of this episode of his life. It is told twice at the Ramesseum, once on the outside walls of the temple of Amen at Karnak, and the great temple itself at Abou Simbel is said to have been raised to commemorate this campaign.

The court is a scene of absolute desolation. Before the second pylon lie the remains of the giant statue of Rameses which has been described by Diodorus and sung of by Shelley. So great that it is said to have weighed 1,000 tons, so tall that it is said to have been sixty feet high, but now it lies fallen, and its face is hidden in the sand as if the pride of Rameses could not brook the

entrance of invading Persians into his holy place.

The second court is impressive in its ruin, for the pillars are figures of the wrapped mummy of Rameses as Osiris, several of which are standing, looking down in unmoved majesty on the ruin beneath. There is a fine head of Rameses, the King, carved in black granite, lying in this court. We went up by a few steps into the great hypostyle, part of which is still roofed with gigantic blocks of stone, and on its walls are found battle scenes again. But I was not looking for scenes of warfare. I had begun to feel sorry for Rameses after having seen his downfall outside the second pylon, and had been trying to discover something of hope. I had found the serene Osiris figures in the outer court, and here on the wall of the small hypostyle hall, reached through the great hall, I found a large carving showing Rameses seated among the leaves of the tree of life, probably a kind of celestial acacia, while Sakhmet and Thoth write his name upon each leaf, in order that it may not be forgotten in the sight of men nor in the ears of the gods.

I began knowing that Rameses was an inordinate braggart and boaster and have ended by making myself feel both sorry and glad for him.

The rest is a scene of ruin except for some vaulted brick buildings, on the bricks of which the cartouche of Rameses is to be seen. When Rameses

was regarded as the Pharaoh of the oppression, these store-houses were pointed out as having been built by the Hebrews in bondage.

It is not a far cry from the fallen grandeur of the Ramesseum, reminiscent of the glory of one Pharaoh of the Nineteenth Dynasty, to the wide field of ruins strewn with buildings of many periods, which are all combined in the name Medinet Habu.

I especially wanted some visitant from the Underworld, as they would have called it, to help me here; instead I had to rely on guide-books, Dr. Baikie and Professor Budge, and my own imagination !

When we came to what I called "the little temple," it was a case of going backwards, historically, from the first century A.D. as far back as 1500 B.C. Passing through a gateway said to be of the time of Domitian, Emperor of Rome, A.D. 81, I found myself in a forecourt, also of the time of the Romans: the pylons facing me were built by the Ptolemies who ruled in Egypt for two hundred years before the Christian era, and the next court is claimed by the half-Libyan prince, Nectanebis II, who, in the seventh century B.C. attempted to hold back the second victorious Persian invasion.

Taharka, the Ethiopian Pharaoh, who was defeated by the son of Sennacherib, "the Great King" of Assyria, built a gateway

leading to the sacred lake within the enclosure wall.

We have been making our way back, all through the centuries, to the temple court surrounding the holy of holies, which is the ancient part of the building. Menepthah, son of Rameses the Great, had inscribed on the doorway leading into it that he had given instructions for its restoration, while the reliefs on the sanctuary itself show Thothmes I, the earliest builder, being led by Hathor and Atum into the presence of Amen, who writes his name on the leaves of the Sacred Tree.

So that the courts of this small temple had echoed with the footsteps of men who came to worship Amen, the Omnipotent, the Hidden One, from mighty Rome, from beautiful Greece, from Ethiopia in the south and from Assyria and Persia in the Far East.

If the small temple at Medinet Habu is an epitome of the history of Egypt, the reliefs on the walls of the temple within the sacred enclosure, begun and finished by Rameses III, are an epitome of the life of this Pharaoh who, some fifty years after the Great Rameses had been laid to rest in the Valley of the Kings, sought to allay the decadence which had settled upon Egypt and to bring back its pristine glory among the Conquerors of the World. I am not going to pretend to tell you about every part of it, but will tell you enough to explain what I have learnt by studying it.

First there is what is called the Pavilion of Rameses III, an unknown form of architecture in Egypt. It is a fortress gate which is said to represent just such a one as had caused the Pharaoh "inconvenience" when endeavouring to capture some of the towns in Syria. There are several rooms in it; the reliefs on the walls are somewhat suggestive of frescoes in once gay Pompeii! Some say that the Pharaoh and the ladies of his harem occupied them occasionally, some that they were the vantage-point from which these ladies viewed the triumphal procession of the Pharaoh after his victories, and others suggest that they may have a funerary significance giving Pharaoh's ideas of future happiness in the world to which one day he must set out.

We have to walk a short distance from the pavilion towards the great temple, leaving a small shrine of comparatively late date on our left and "the temple of the ages" on our right, before coming to the first pylon, where the four slots or grooves for the festival flagstaffs can be seen very clearly. The reliefs on the pylon show Rameses III, a gigantic being smiting his enemies in the presence of Harakte, the god of dawn, and Amen Ra, the god of the midday sun.

Opening out of the first court on the left are three doors by which the King could come from his palace into the holy place, and a window which may have had a balcony or loggia before it from

which he might sometimes read decrees or show himself to his people.

I suggested that this temple was an epitome of the life of Pharaoh. So far we have found him revelling among his ladies, smiting his foes. We have pictured him coming from his palace, on the south side of the temple, to read his decrees as a king or to tell of his victories. Now, as we pass through the courts, where some of the huge pillars carved with flower capitals still show signs of colour, others represent the King, wrapped as a mummy, waiting stone-still in the outer precincts of the Holy of Holies. There are three hypostyle or pillared halls before the sanctuary is reached, but they reminded me of a field of cauliflowers with the heads cut off, for only the stumps of the pillars remain, due to the fact, it is said, that a Coptic village was built over it, and so we came to the godless sanctuary, for this is the temple of Rameses III, "built by himself for himself." On either side of the first hall there are four small chapels, two dedicated to Ptah, the father of gods and men, one to Osiris, the god of the Resurrection, and one to Rameses. I wondered if the first chapel represented Ptah as the father of the man Rameses, the second one Ptah as the father of the god Rameses, with the chapel to the god Osiris necessary for his resurrection between.

Perhaps I am rather hard on Rameses, but he

strikes me as being a man arrogant, presumptuous and self-confident. The only statues remaining in the temple are two of red granite, Rameses accompanied by the ibis-headed Thoth, god of Wisdom, and Rameses seated beside Maet, the goddess of Truth. In neither is he kneeling or standing, but seated on an equality with them.

So far we had judged Pharaoh and learnt what we could about him from what is, and what is not, in the temple. Now, we walked round the walls to see what he did in the days of his greatness. The reliefs show that he fought by land and he fought by sea. The first picture of a naval battle is drawn on the walls of this temple, and shows ships ramming one another and being capsized, with all the attendant misery to their crews. He worshipped, too, for on one of the walls in the second court there is a series of scenes in which he is shown being borne in his palanquin on the shoulders of his soldiers, while other soldiers in festival dress march before him and priests offer incense on the feast day of the god Min, Lord of the Eastern deserts, Lord of foreign lands, although I am inclined to think that Rameses regards himself as the supreme being. He fought by land and by sea, he worshipped, and then we found him hunting—one specially fine relief shows him spearing wild bulls. "So one man in his time plays many parts."

After leaving Medinet Habu we drove to the quiet valley where the queens once slept, and there I found Rameses III again, this time as a father leading his little son, Amen-Khopshef, into the dread unknown.

Some of the colour on the walls of this tomb, which is close to that of Queen Nefertiti, is still bright. Some people as they look at these pictured walls see again the arrogance and boastfulness of the Pharaoh as he enters unbidden into the presence of the gods as if demanding the meaning of his son's summons.

I am inclined to think more gently of him here and to see the great Pharaoh clasping the child by the hand, fearful lest he be lonely, and to hear him whispering as he leads the way, "I will go first."

This has been such a long letter that you will have forgotten about the Ramesseum, which tells of the Pharaoh, Rameses II, whom I called a braggart and a boaster, and you will have quite forgotten that I told you in another letter of Bekenkhons, the architect, pointing out the little figure of Queen Nefertiti, who is sculptured standing behind the great statues of the King as if claiming his protection. I am reminding you of both, because here, in this valley, we went into her beautiful tomb.

In the inscription outside the temple which

Rameses built to her memory at Abou Simbel, the Queen is called simply "Neferti whom he loves," and in this painted tomb we could hear the echo, "Neferti whom he loves."

It is not as deeply dug as the tombs of the Pharaohs in the Valley of the Kings, and is bright with pictures which tell of the gaiety and joyousness of the land beyond the river.

There is the well-known scene showing the Queen's Ka playing chess beneath the Eternal Tent and others showing the Queen herself being led into the presence of the gods by gods. Horus presents her to the god of the dawn, and to Hathor, in whose honour her temple on the Upper Nile was dedicated, "the goddess of love and joy," and Isis leads her into the presence of Khepri, the beetle-headed god of the resurrection.

All through the tomb, even down into the burial-hall, which lies on a lower level, where once the sarcophagus stood, you feel that the Queen, gay, lovely, well-dressed and happy, was under the protecting care of the goddesses who spread their wings over her. At the entrance of the tomb itself, the Ka of the Queen is represented adoring the rising sun, which appears between the two lions, "Yesterday and To-morrow."

Why need the Queen moan, or lament—

yesterday was happy—and to-morrow will bring joy. This is the message which the Queen receives as her mummy is brought into the beautiful tomb prepared for her by the one who loved her.

Good night,

Yours, ——

XIII

TOMBS OF THE NOBLES

Dear Ones,

A friend said to me as she shivered beside me on the Nile boat one day when it was chilly and dull : " I would rather be wicked than cold." The day we went to the Tombs of the Nobles at Thebes I felt inclined to say : " I would rather be wicked than hot !" It was hot, doubly underlined, as we clambered up the hill overlooking the plain, where the nobles of the fifteenth century before Christ had hollowed their tombs. We had driven through green fields, and had passed the Colossi, two gigantic figures of Amenophis III, who have remained for four thousand years seated outside his magnificent mortuary temple, which no longer exists ; although they don't know it, for their backs are turned to its vanished glory.

In the year 27 B.C. an earthquake rocked them and the upper part of one crashed, but was repaired by the Roman Emperor Septimius Severus about 200 A.D. Within those two hundred years, this one broken giant achieved fame, for it emitted a

curious sound at sunrise and became identified with Priam's nephew, the Egyptian Memnon, the son of the goddess of dawn who came to the aid of Troy and to whom Zeus granted the boon of immortality. On earth it is said that men raised this colossal statue which gave forth a voice whenever it was struck by the rising sun.

The tourists of those days came to hear and see the wonder, and scratched their names upon the pedestal. After the restoration by Severus the song ceased. So I leave you to draw your own conclusions concerning the phenomenon.

We arrived at the top of the hill and drove through the village, the mud houses of which lie amid the honeycomb of tombs belonging to what is called the Lower Enclosure of Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, or "The Hill of the Saint." The car disgorged us, and the footman, a mite of about eight years old, was dispatched to get the guardian. Then followed an amusing episode. We could not speak Arabic, neither did we know how to pronounce the names of the noblemen whose tombs we particularly wished to see; the guardian understood hardly a word of English, and no doubt our English was not pronounced as it should have been. So, with a certain amount of trepidation, I seized the load of keys, with brass labels attached, on which were numbers, tied round his black-robed figure and selected the numbers we wanted and signalled to him to lead the way. It was a

scramble, up a bare mountain- or cliff-side, but when we reached our objective, the tombs in the Upper Enclosure, we had a wonderful view of the Nile Valley beneath us.

First let me tell you I am wrong when I call these the Tombs of the Nobles ; they are really the chapels where the mourners came, to bring offerings and to which the dead returned. The walls are bright with pictures of the life they lived while here among men, by means of which it was hoped that history would repeat itself, and that life and happiness would be their portion for ever and ever in the world to which they had gone. They are generally more or less alike in form, being what I should describe as an inverted T ; with certain variations as to width and depth and detail. Sometimes the burial shaft is within the chapel, sometimes it is at some distance from it. The bar of the inverted J is the hall where the relatives gathered in honour of the dead. There, the pictures are generally of the daily life and occupations of the dead man, but when the corridor is entered leading to the shrine, and to the niche for the statue of the deceased, they are definitely of funeral ritual, the pilgrimage to Abydos, a funerary feast, with figures of the dead or of the gods of the dead. That is just enough to give you an idea. I am going to divide these tombs into three different centuries, which I shall head 1500 B.C., 1400 B.C., and 1300 B.C., and shall

describe four in each century, as by that means I shall be able to give you a clearer and more interesting account, and also shall amuse myself by making them form friendships on paper, although in all probability they knew one another in life.

There were four men who lived during the reigns of four Pharaohs: Thothmes I, Hatasu, Thothmes III, Amenophis II, and one of them with great pride asserts that he lived on into the reign of Amenophis III, thereby completing his hundred and tenth year. The names of the four men are Ineni, Amenemhab, Senmut, Reckmerek, and their tombs are known by the following numbers, which I am giving in the same order: eighty-one, eighty-five, seventy-one, one hundred. These men exceeded Signor Mussolini in capacity for work, for they seem to have held many positions at Court, in the Government, and in the Church, at the same time. Ineni, whose tomb we went into first, has the long, transverse hall with five square pillars hewn out of the rock, and the corridor opening from it, with four statues at the far end. The scenes painted on the pillars and on the walls are most entertaining.

These nobles seem to have had an agricultural show on their estates, for Ineni and his friends, and his pet dog of rather doubtful heredity, are seated watching the march past of cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, geese and flamingoes.

Ineni in another scene is with his wife, seated in a shady arbour giving orders to the gardener.

This is Ineni at home, then we see him at play in a hunting scene, where he shoots a hyena who rears up, biting at the broken arrow. That, like the one in Mera's tomb at Sakkara, is evidently an episode that really happened and is not the usual hunting or fishing scene which is portrayed in any and every tomb. Then we see him in his Court capacity watching the tribute brought in from the wars of Thothmes I. Egyptian soldiers are shown driving Nubian women, who carry their babies on their backs in baskets. At Beit al Wali, on the Upper Nile, there is a similar picture. Ineni is called the Overseer of the Granaries of Amen, so he evidently held some office in connection with the Church of his day ; and on one of the walls we saw him inspecting the cattle and grain on the temple estate. This was one of the times when I should have liked to be able to read hieroglyphics, for there is a copy of the broken stele which tells of this man's doings and of his own merits from his own point of view. He tells how he hollowed the first tomb in the Valley of the Kings, which was that of Thothmes I, who reigned from 1545 to 1400 B.C., in loneliness and silence, " no man seeing, no man hearing." An absolute impossibility unless at each nightfall the gang of labourers for that day were quietly put to sleep ! He says that he built a long boat in which to bring down two obelisks for

Thothmes I by river from Assouan, and then from thinking of the late Pharaoh, he reviews the condition of the realm at that time when Queen Hatasu ruled with her brother, Thothmes III, saying: "His sister, the Divine Consort, settled the affairs of Egypt according to her ideas."

Ineni must have been rather a trying old gentleman to live with, for he was apparently one of those people "who never did no harm to no one." "Listen and do the good that I did—just like me. . . . I was neither a traitor nor a sneak, and I did no wrong whatever."

Death is the great leveller, and the tomb of this man "who did no wrong whatever" is in no better state of preservation than that of Amenemhab, one of the soldier knights of the Pharaoh Thothmes III. It also is in the Upper Enclosure, and requires a certain amount of hauling and pushing to reach it, especially when the sun is getting to its full strength at midday—the hour of Amen. However, it is worth while every time.

I wonder if Amenemhab knew Ineni. Somehow I think the old soldier who fought with one of the great world-conquerors, who was the first to climb into the breach at Kadesh, and who saved the life of Pharaoh by attracting a charging elephant from his royal master, all of which he tells quite simply in the inscriptions in his tomb, must have smiled quietly if Ineni in life was as vainglorious as in death. Amenemhab's tomb chapel is a little more

elaborate in form than that of Ineni, having a second transverse hall, a second bar to the inverted T, so is shaped \perp ; but as is general, it is the first hall which has the most interesting paintings, both on the plastered walls and on the lintel between the two middle pillars.

Three of them would interest you, although you cannot see them. In one Amenophis II, who had made his father's old captain Inspector of the Royal Guards because he had seen him "rowing wonderfully" in one of the state barges, presents Amenemhab and his wife, whose name is Bakt, to the dead Pharaoh, Thothmes III, who is represented as Osiris, the god of the dead. So the son would set his father's mind at rest concerning the welfare of his old companion in arms. Another shows Amenemhab going over the roll call of a troop of soldiers. The one over the lintel is of Amenemhab striking a hyena with a club. The hyena is huge—I think Amenemhab must have been the forerunner of some fishermen or golfers—who are known for their tall stories.

I noticed red crosses splashed on the walls by some Coptic hermit who had thus sought to obliterate any scene which might detract from his devotions.

We began to descend from the top of the upper level and now came to the tomb of my old friend, Senmut, the builder and architect of Queen Hatasu's temple, who had accompanied Bekenkhons and me to Luxor and Karnak. I told you

he was sad of face and was inclined to be nervous. I discovered that he had lost his nerve during the latter part of the reign of Thothmes III, after his great mistress had died. At first, it seems that his devotion to her was so great that he desired to be buried within the precincts of Deir-el-Bahari, even beneath the Sacred Court, but the tomb was never finished, suggesting that on the Queen's death his burial there was forbidden ; so he hollowed out a tomb in the cliffs among the other nobles. Knowing that his popularity had waned, nay, had died with the Queen, and that his loyalty to her had brought him into ill favour, he tried by subterfuge to ensure that his name might live before the gods for evermore. So he had lines of inscriptions in which his name appeared written on the walls of his tomb ; these were plastered over and on the fresh plaster fresh inscriptions were written. But spite was very bitter in those days, the name of Senmut was discovered and erased, and the tomb chapel hacked and plundered. We had been told to look for some remains of decorations which show paintings of Mycenaean envoys bearing Cretan vases, and high up at one end of an enclosed part of the hall we discovered slim-waisted figures bearing the long Cretan vases such as we had seen at Knossus.

Still lower down we came to the tomb chapel of another of the noblemen of Thebes of the same time, that of Reckmeh, who was Governor of

Thebes and Vizier of Thothmes III, so possibly he had something to do with the danger and disgrace of Senmut. This tomb has a long corridor which leads out of the cross passage, narrowing towards the end but increasing in height.

It is said that Reckmerek was the second most important man in the Near East. It is easy to realise this when you look at the five long lines of peoples from five different countries bringing gifts and tribute to the Court of Thothmes III, and incidentally to Reckmerek, from Punt, from the isles of Greece, from Nubia, Syria, and from the South. When we were there an artist was copying these scenes by means of mirrors giving reflected light. Another scene of great interest is that which shows the Vizier as judge in a law court before whose throne prisoners or pleaders are brought by ushers. Now would you like to hear Reckmerek's epitaph written by himself.

"There was nothing of which I, Reckmerek, was ignorant in heaven, in earth, or in any quarter of the world."

All these men lived in the reign of the Pharaoh Thothmes III, one of the empire-builders of the old world, who, as Reckmerek informed us, "knew all that happened and never failed to carry out a matter which he took in hand."

These are the four characteristic tombs of the fifteenth century before Christ. Number seventy-eight, that of Haremhab, who was a centenarian

who lived and worked under four Pharaohs as Royal Scribe and Scribe of Recruits, is interesting too, but I am getting tired of writing and have still two centuries to reckon with. I am going on with four men who lived between 1400 and 1300 B.C. These are Menna, Ka-em-hat, Sennofer and Ramose. Tombs number sixty-nine, fifty-seven, ninety-six, fifty-five. Two of them, sixty-nine and ninety-six, being in what is called the Upper Enclosure; fifty-seven and fifty-five being in the same district, "The Hill of the Saint," but a little farther down.

I remember hearing a sermon years ago in which the preacher, in speaking about quarrelling, remarked that in an Egyptian tomb a quarrel of three thousand years ago was pictured. Two little girls who had been playing happily together in a harvest field had a disagreement, a quarrel ensued, followed by each one tearing the other's hair. Little did I think then that years later I should actually be looking at this scene, and yet on this sunny day, in the shadow of Menna's tomb, I came upon it, on the left-hand entrance wall. It is rather curious that this quarrel, which is one evidently seen and remarked on by the artist, was only of minor importance when we looked carefully at the other paintings on the walls. Menna, the Scribe of the Lord of the Two Lands of Upper and Lower Egypt, evidently had an enemy who somehow managed to get into the tomb, determining that

life and happiness in the other world should not be his portion.

There are several scenes where spite is very evident. Menna's fields are being measured, but the enemy has succeeded in cutting out the knots in the measuring-line so that Menna may never again count his acres. Menna's eye has been destroyed that he may not see the food placed before him on the table of offerings, and in the inner corridor where there are the usual funerary scenes, the voyage to Abydos and the weighing of the heart, Menna's enemy has destroyed not only the balance but even the eye of the figure holding the scales, so that for Menna there is no hope of a favourable judgment. I pondered who the unknown enemy could be, and found two little indications which showed that Menna was a hard master. In the scene where he is shown watching the measuring of the fields, a slave prostrates himself to kiss his master's feet, and in another Menna is waiting to welcome friends from a boat and a slave is shown beating one of the sailors, while a second, with upraised hands, is begging for mercy. So I queried if it were the obsequious slave or the beaten sailor who was determined to bring Menna to utter destruction.

Number fifty-seven is the tomb of Ka-em-hat. It is sometimes spelt Khaemhêt, and sometimes Ka-Emhet. He was the Keeper of the Royal Stores and Granaries of the City of Thebes, much

the same position, I imagine, as that held by Joseph, "the young Hebrew," for whom we are told "Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand and put it upon Joseph's hand and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck," and the last picture on the first transverse wall of this tomb we see that the Pharaoh Amenophis III, mindful of Ka-em-hat's faithful service, decorating him with a gold chain to which is attached a golden scarab.

There are two other particularly interesting pictures in this tomb, one showing the snake-headed goddess Renenet, lady of the harvest, seated in a shrine, nursing a child who stands for the New Year, which reminded me of the snake goddess of Crete who was regarded then as the great Corn Mother and is sometimes associated with Rhea. As you may imagine, it did not take me long to settle to my own satisfaction that Rhea and Renenet were the same, and in the next picture where the port of Thebes is shown with ships moored to the quay, corn-galleys, with oars and mast-heads ornamented with the head of the Pharaoh, I naturally determined that they were made to trade between Crete and Thebes !

From the sea we went deep down into a garden, the tomb of Sennofer, who was Mayor of the Southern City (Thebes) and also Overseer of the Granaries and Field, the Garden and Cattle of

Amen. This is a beautiful tomb, number ninety-six, and is well worth having to go down a narrow steep staircase into thick darkness which is lighted by candles. The ceilings of the outer room and inner hall are painted with climbing vines and growing flowers. The hall has four square pillars. Now, it seems that the Overseer of the Garden of Amen had a daughter named Mutty, or Mit-tuy, and that she was in the temple choir, for she is called "A songstress of Amen Ra." In one of the pictures she is seen standing behind her father, to whom servants are bringing offerings preparatory to the funeral, two necklaces, two little figures of servants who will answer "Here am I" when Sennofer requires work done for him in the other world, and the funeral mask which will fit over the head of the mummy in its coffin.

The wife of Sennofer was Meryt. We saw them beneath the vines and clustering grapes—before Osiris and Hathor and before Osiris and Anubis, after having been purified with holy water by a priest wearing a leopard skin. There are no corn-fields with quarrelling children, no Pharaoh bestowing a golden chain upon a faithful servant, but a man and his wife, who in life had lived beneath the overshadowing care of the great god, who had given their child to his service, and were now purified and content, seated beneath the

sacred tree in the Garden of Amen beyond the shining river.

The very last I am going to tell you about in this letter is the temple tomb of Ramose. I seem to have done nothing else but talk of "graves and worms and epitaphs."

This tomb chapel, like that of Reckmerek, was to have been the tomb of one who was a Vizier and Governor of Thebes. Ramose lived not in the days of Egypt's greatness, but when the mighty empire was tottering under the Pharaoh Akhenaton, when the religion of Amen was giving way for a time to the worship of the Aten, and the capital city was about to be transferred to El Amarna. This is said to account for the fact that the tomb chapel was left unfinished and that the decorations on its walls show the transition from the art of the Eighteenth Dynasty to the greater freedom and more natural style of the short Amarna period. You remember that Queen Nefertiti showed me in the museum the paintings of birds, flowers and rushes which they had delighted in; with which the houses and palaces at Amarna were decorated.

The hall of this tomb was one of the largest and most ambitious we had seen. It once had thirty-two columns supporting the roof, but the roof fell and the columns too, but a new roof has been constructed and the columns restored and built up by Mr. Mond, of the Liverpool University.

The interest, of course, lies in the reliefs and paintings on the walls and the inscriptions which have been read and translated for the unlearned by the wise men of the earth. Ramose seems to have been a thorough-going convert to the new religion of the Aten, for in one of the inscriptions Akhenaton claims that he has received the new teaching "of the solar disk, the source of all things," from the god himself.

To which Ramose answers "Thy monuments shall endure like the heavens for thy duration is like Aten therein. The existence of thy monuments is like the existence of the heavens: thou art the only ONE in possession of his designs."

I should have told you that Akhenaton's name was first Amenophis and that he ascended the throne as Amenophis IV, but that later he changed it to Akhenaton, which means "The Spirit of the Solar Disk."

Part of the tomb is carved in fine relief on pure white limestone, only the hair and the eyelashes being painted black. One of them shows Ramose and his wife, Ptah Meryt, seated on chairs carved with slender legs, and close behind them Amenhotep, the brother of Ramose, with his daughter: on another wall some of the usual funerary scenes are painted, but in a much freer and more realistic style. The arms of the wailing women look as if they really might be waving and from their eyes the tears do fall.

TOMBS OF THE NOBLES

On the wall near the corridor there are some beautiful reliefs showing the king, queen and their children worshipping Aton as seen in the sun's rays, each ray ending in a hand which bestows upon them the mystic symbols of life and happiness : and another where the king and his followers kneel with heads bowed before the unseen god, " the one and only god," who loved his earthly children and was ready to hear their prayers that light perpetual might shine upon them.

And so we have walked through two centuries in these tombs, years of war, of conquest and prosperity, and have ended in a tomb, built during a religious revolution, the only one which ever convulsed Egypt, its white walls symbolising the peace which the young Pharaoh was powerless to bestow upon his people.

Sleep calls and so good night. The other tombs must wait until another day. " I can no more——"

Yours, ——

XIV

TOMBS OF THE NOBLES

My Dears,

Last night I said with Macbeth, " I have supped full with " but altered " horrors " into " tombs," so bade you good night. To-day I will return to the attack and tell you of the four last of the series : the tombs of some of those nobles of Thebes who lived in the thirteenth century B.C., during the reigns of Haremheb, Seti I and Rameses II, by name Neferhotpe, Userhet, Pashedu, Ipy, by numbers, fifty, fifty-one, three, two hundred and seventeen. The first two are near together in the El Sheikh Abd el-Qurna region, the other two are near the little temple of Deir-el-Medineh.

Neferhotpe was a priest of Amen Ra, the king of the gods. It was a wealthy priesthood, for when the Pharaohs became owners of all the land in Egypt, and also returned home laden with spoils from many battle-fields, they bestowed land and great riches upon the temples of Amen at Karnak and at Thebes, so that the priests became wealthy and powerful. In the tombs which we had already

visited, and in the temples too, we had seen the reaping of the fields of Amen, the counting of his cattle, and also the gifts being brought from afar and being bestowed upon the great god of Empire, in other words, upon his priests.

Realising this, it was all the more tragic to enter the tomb of Neferhotpe, a priest of Amen of the time immediately following the return to the worship of the god of Empire after the so-called heresy of Akhenaton.

On the row beneath the painting of a feast is one of a harper with the text of the song he has been singing in front of him. It is based upon one of the most popular Egyptian poems of the Eleventh Dynaſty, called "The Lay of the Harper," which was chanted at the banquets of wealthy men. Herodotus says that in his day "ere the company rises, a small coffin which contains a perfect model of the human body is carried round and shown to each guest in turn. He who bears it exclaims 'Look at this figure—after death you will be like it. Drink, therefore, and be merry!'" But probably when the song was first written in the time of the blessed King Intef, about 2300 B.C., or in the case of a funerary feast, the real mummy was dragged through the banqueting hall.

The interest, of course, is in the song, for the version in this tomb is longer than the original and perhaps gives a soliloquy once made by Neferhotpe himself at one of these feasts, which he

decided should remain for ever, as he hoped, on the walls of his tomb, and which might give him a favourable passport into the land of eternity. Apparently he had been disillusioned and was tired of life, even of the rejoicings which must have taken place at the return of the Court to Thebes and the consequent reversion to the worship of Amen with its attendant priestly power: for the harper sings "I have heard the songs that are in the tombs of ancient time. What they say, when they extol the life on earth and belittle the region of the dead—to what purpose is it that they act thus towards the land of eternity, the just and the right, where no errors are? This land where there is no foe, all our kindred rest in it, since the earliest day of time and they that shall be in millions of millions of years, they come hither everyone. There is none that may tarry in the land of Egypt. There is not one that doth not pass yonder. 'Welcome, safe and sound,' is said to him that hath reached the West." They probably thought him a gloomy priest in the land of the sun-god, and said that he suffered from melancholia. I wondered if some dim memory of Akhenaton's teaching of peace, of love and of beauty still lingered in the minds of men.

Quite close to this tomb is one which has delightful pictures painted on its walls. The colour is still bright in the tomb of Userhet, first prophet of the royal Ka of Thothmes I in the reign of Seti I.

This was the second time we had come across a reference to a Ka priest ; the first time was nearly a thousand years earlier, in the tomb of Hepzefa at Assiout. I have already told you about it so will not repeat myself.

One of the things which interested me most in this tomb was the sense of ancestor and family unity in it. Userhet, as I have said, was a prophet of the royal Ka of Thothmes I, that is to say, in the year 1320 B.C. Prayers were still being offered for the eternal happiness of a king who had died two hundred years earlier : and in the paintings on the walls are scenes of offerings made by Userhet's son, Userhet, to his father and mother, and others in which members of Userhet's family are making offerings to the deified Thothmes I. There is a small scene on one of the two short walls of the hall which is beautiful as well as being symbolic. Userhet and his wife and sister sit beneath what is called a fig-tree, the fruit is yellow and amid the green leaves flit blue wagtails. I was looking closely at the picture and saw hovering over the heads of the two white-robed women human-headed birds, and recognised them as being their Bas. A patch of blue, evidently a lake, lay before them, out of which rises a goddess who pours the water of life out of a golden vessel into cups from which Userhet and the two women drink. There is a picture within a picture. Between Userhet and the goddess there is another lake, T-shaped,

beside which Userhet and his wife walk in the shape of human-headed birds, drinking the water of life out of their cupped hands. So apparently both Userhet and his wife have made the long journey.

Now for a change. I am going to take you to the little temple of Deir-el-Medineh, the place of truth, before we go up to the tomb of Pshedu, who was its servant.

It will not take me long to describe, for "is it not a little one?" After entering a stone doorway in the mud-brick wall, we crossed the enclosure and passed through the doorway into the vestibule of the sandstone temple built by the Ptolemies, which has two flower columns supporting a partly fallen roof.

Three chapels faced us, divided from the vestibule by a screen wall with two Hathor-headed pillars. Over the door of the central one are seven Hathor heads. The left chapel is the interesting one, for carved on its walls is a more or less complete picture of the weighing of the heart. The goddess of truth, Maet, is shown before the dead man and behind him, as if to support his fainting spirit, while his heart is being weighed in the balances against the Feather of Truth. Above sit the forty-two judges of the dead, who will give judgment according as to whether the heart is found wanting or no. Thoth, pen in hand, waits to record the result of the weighing. Osiris, into

whose presence the acquitted soul will pass, is seated on his throne, while a terrifying looking monster waits to devour him who is unjustified !

I have described the temple as it is to-day. There is an idea that it was built on the site of the original tomb-chapel of Amenhotpe, the son of Hapu, the wise man who served Amenophis III. His figure appears on one of the two Hathor-headed pillars, while that of Im-hotep, the famous architect and doctor of the King, who built the Step Pyramid, is on the other.

Now from the Place of Truth we walked along a narrow track and climbed up a steep path to the tomb of Peshedu, who was one of its priests ; although it must have been in " the elder temple," for Peshedu lived in the time of Rameses II, about a thousand years earlier.

After having struggled up, when the gate of the tomb was unlocked we had to stumble down a steep staircase before coming to one or two small rooms and a high-roofed corridor on either side of which lies Anubis, the jackal-headed god, protector and guide of the dead. The most interesting of the paintings is one of Peshedu crouching in prayer beneath a palm tree which grows beside a lake. It gives the idea of a man in the open air suddenly becoming conscious of the unseen presence of his Creator in the world around him, or of a priest first realising his unworthiness as servant of the All-holy One.

The twelfth man on this long list of nobles into whose tomb we went was Ipy, a sculptor in the time of Rameses II. I could discover little about him, except that I think he must have been one of the die-hards of the day, who was either too old or too conservative to run with the Liberals or hunt with the Socialists of the early Nineteenth Dynasty. The pictures on the walls of his tomb are those which tell of the life of a country gentleman ; there are scenes of agricultural and pastoral life, of ploughing and reaping, of flocks and of herds, such as we had seen in tombs of a hundred years earlier. There is a scene of the harvest home, an offering being made to the goddess Renenet, the lady of the harvest, who had presided over the granaries when Amenophis III sat on the throne and decorated Ka-em-hat with a chain of gold. The most interesting scene from the artistic point of view, and in the tomb of an artist it is that for which you look, shows Pharaoh leaning over a balcony, bestowing honours on a group of courtiers below. It is not drawn in the stiff conventional style of the earlier centuries, but with the freedom displayed by the artists of Amarna. The scene itself is similar to the one in the tomb of Ramose, where Akhenaton and his Queen throw down golden decorations to Ramose.

I wondered if Ipy himself and Bekenkhons were among the crowd beneath the palace balcony, but was unable to identify them.

Since I have been writing these letters on the tombs in the Valley of the Kings, the Valley of the Queens, and of the nobles in the Hill of the Saint, I have thought what a wonderful last scene in a pageant it would be if they all marched past. So I am going if I can to bring all of those whom I have told you about before my own eyes and yours, each Pharaoh leading the nobles of his day before bidding them a long farewell.

Hatshepsut, the Queen, comes first. A beautiful woman dressed in a long white robe, her narrow waist encircled by a deep belt, a wide flat necklace of carnelian and lapis lazuli beads around her neck. Resting upon her shaven head is a golden bird, its head upraised, its long wing feathers falling behind her ears. Majesty and forcefulness are in every step and yet her head is lifted high and her eyes gaze upward as if trying to catch a glimpse of "her better self."

Close behind her come two old men. Ineni, with his pet dog, has come from his country house, to which he had retired on the death of the Queen's father : and Senmut, no longer old and afraid, but decorated with the gold chain which betokens a favourite of the reigning Pharaoh.

Following the Queen and her companions is a man, fearless and vigorous. In every line of his face he shows himself to be a great man and a conqueror. On one side of him marches a soldier of high command, and on the other his Prime

Minister. We recognise them as Thothmes III, Amenemhab and Reckmerek.

Then come four Pharaohs and four courtiers : Amenophis II with his famous bow slung over his shoulder, which none but he is mighty enough to draw, and a few steps behind him Sennofer, whose sister had been nurse to the King, and whose picture is on one of the walls in the gardener's tomb. The hated Menna walks proudly behind his King, Thothmes IV, who in his short reign had endeavoured to clear away the sand from the Sphinx in answer to the divine voice of Harmachis, who appeared to him while he lay asleep under its shadow at midday, saying : " Thou shalt be to me a protector, for my condition is that I am ailing in all my limbs. The sand of this desert upon which I am has reached me."

Amenophis III, surnamed the Magnificent, in whose land " gold is as common as dust," followed by Ka-em-hat, resplendent in a great gold chain and elaborate wig, pass by.

A pause and the young king Akhenaton, leaning heavily upon the arm of a man richly robed and bearing the insignia of his high office as Governor of Thebes and Vizier, comes slowly into view. Then a brusque soldier hurries along as if to get away from the sad notes of a harper, who, chanting slowly, walks in front of a man in a leopard skin. A Pharaoh and a priest, Haremheb and Neferhotpe.

Seti I and Userhet, walk side by side, but

they both keep looking backward. I wondered why, and then remembered that they each lived in the presence of the Pharaoh Thothmes I, who had wielded the sceptre of sovereignty some two hundred years earlier, to whose Ka offerings were being made daily.

A sound of martial music heralds the great Rameses. He stops and waits as a dainty little lady comes quickly to his side, followed by the priest and the sculptor whom her husband has honoured.

And so they pass and I say with Januarius, the Roman official :

“ Farewell, all of you.”

Yours, —

XV

ISNA

Dears,

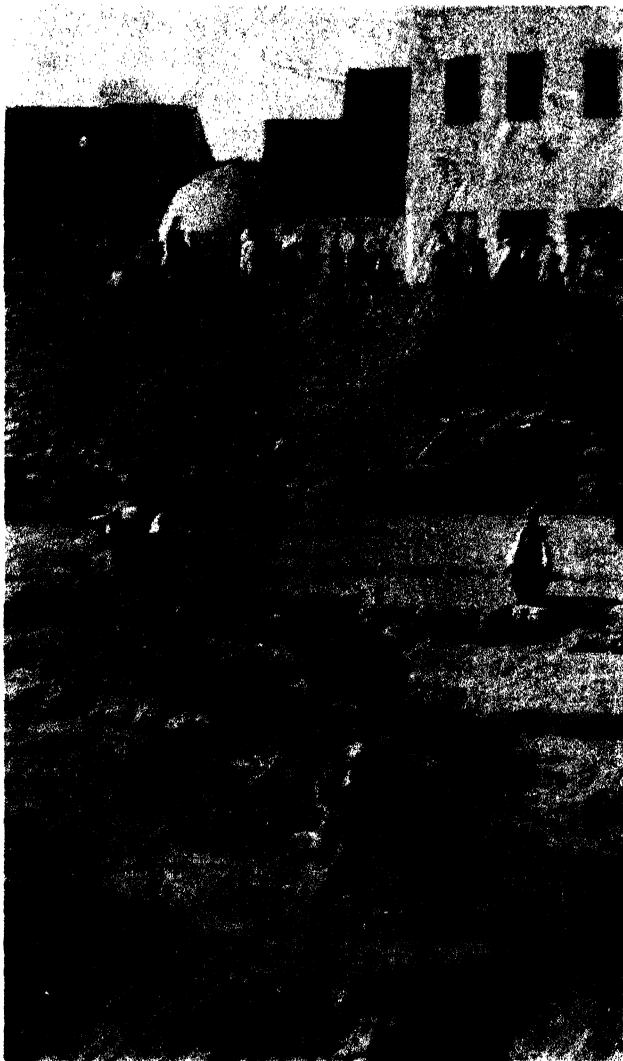
We left Luxor at dawn and soon after breakfast found ourselves, or at least the good ship *Sudan* with us on board, between the stone walls of the Isna lock.

There was a good deal of excitement on shore and among our own blue-jerseyed white-
"shorted" crew (note the new word, "shorted," typifying shorts), as we finally emerged and tied up at Isna.

While we were waiting to land, I amused myself by noticing the various uses to which the Egyptian natives put Father Nile.

Some women after filling their water-pots poised them on their heads and proceeded in a stately fashion up the steep banks, others were doing the family washing in the muddy river, busily chattering all the while.

Some men, after filling their water-skins, waited, posing to be photographed, while others washed themselves, bobbing up and down like Victorian



Scene on the Banks of the Nile at Isna

bathers. Dozens of baby black children were paddling, oxen and buffaloes were sporting in it, but no priests of the sun-god came down to the water's edge bearing the sacred barque.

I had forgotten. We are in the twentieth century, no longer at Luxor, but at Isna, and are going to see a part of a buried temple.

Do you remember these words out of Browning's "Pied Piper" ?

" Rats—

They even spoiled the women's chats
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats."

Just change the R into B and you have an idea of what happened to us.

The temple is quite modern in Egypt, having been begun about 180 B.C. and completed in A.D. 250—from which we know that the Ptolemies and a good many of the Roman Emperors were responsible for the building of it.

The pronaos, which is all that is visible to-day, has, to be thoroughly guide-booky, six rows of four columns each, some of the capitals of which are beautifully carved, one in particular having very fine bunches of grapes encircling it.

I wonder if you realise that the Roman Emperors, ruling as Pharaohs, had their cartouches carved

here, there and everywhere—of course, I could not read them, but certain of them were pointed out to me as being those of Vespasian, Trajan, the mad Commodus and Caracalla. The latter seems to have carried his hatred and fear of his murdered brother, Geta, as far as Egypt, for here he had his cartouche erased even as he had had his name blocked out of the inscription on the Arch of Severus in the Roman Forum.

The ram-headed god Khnum is the presiding deity here, and in one of the reliefs there is shown the priest in the act of cutting the first-fruits with a sickle and then offering it to the god.

I think I have read somewhere that Khnum is regarded as one of the creator-gods. Yes ! I remember now having seen reliefs of his modelling the divine Amenophis III and his Ka on the potter's wheel in the Birth-room at the Temple of Luxor.

But although the temple was dedicated to Khnum the people venerated the Nile fish caught here, of which a pit filled with mummified remains was found in the town.

Now, having talked of fish, of rams and Roman Emperors, you will wonder why on earth I began with the Browning quotation and suggested that you should put B's instead of R's. Simply because there were bats and bats and bats which snored and croaked and screamed under the roof above our

heads among the great columns, as if wickedly resenting the presence of a few tourists who penetrated into their night.

I wonder what will happen to these half-blind horrors if the temple is ever completely excavated, as it is hoped it will be in the fullness of time; that is to say, when there is money enough to do it.

On our way back to the boat I was talking to a nice Canadian woman who had globe-trotted a good deal, and said how bats made me feel creepy, and she told me of an interesting experience which she had at Anghor Vat, a temple in French Indo-China.

She said that the walls of this beautiful Hindu temple, hidden away in the jungle, were covered with miles of wonderful carving in bas-relief but that its five towers were the homes of literally thousands of bats.

One day as the sun was setting she and those who were with her watched.

Just as the golden ball dropped behind the trees, as if at a given signal, a cloud of black-winged bats swept out from one of the towers, five seconds later another cloud emerged from the second tower and so on from each of the five until the sky became literally black with them.

Again I thought of the scene in the town hall at Hamelin. The old fat burghers seated at the

council table, " when in did come the strangest figure——

" His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red ;
And he himself was tall and thin
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin
But lips where smiles went out and in "

and seemed to hear him say as he advanced to the council table :

" Yet poor piper as I am
In Tartary I freed the Cham,
Last June, from his huge swarm of gnats ;
I eased in Asia the Nizam
Of a monstrous brood of vampyre-bats."

I must end, for " the black bat, night, has flown "
and I must go on deck, for " the breeze of morning
moves."

Yours, ——

XVI

EDFU

My Dear Ones,

Travellers or tourists in Egypt consider themselves defrauded when the sun does not shine, the sky is grey, and the wind is chilly, but insult was added to injury, for rain fell at Edfu and we and the natives were inclined to think that the end of the world was not far off.

An old policeman in charge of the landing party held a blue cotton sunshade over his head to keep off the rain, while some men who had brought "anteekas" for us to see in wide rush trays, preferred protection to free trade, packed up their belongings and solemnly watched us with the spreading baskets placed upon their heads for the same purpose; and we staggered up the steep river bank on our way to the temple, and would, all of us, have slithered down as we came back if the crew had not been there to give us friendly assistance.

However, let bygones be bygones—that was last year. This year we saw the beautiful temple

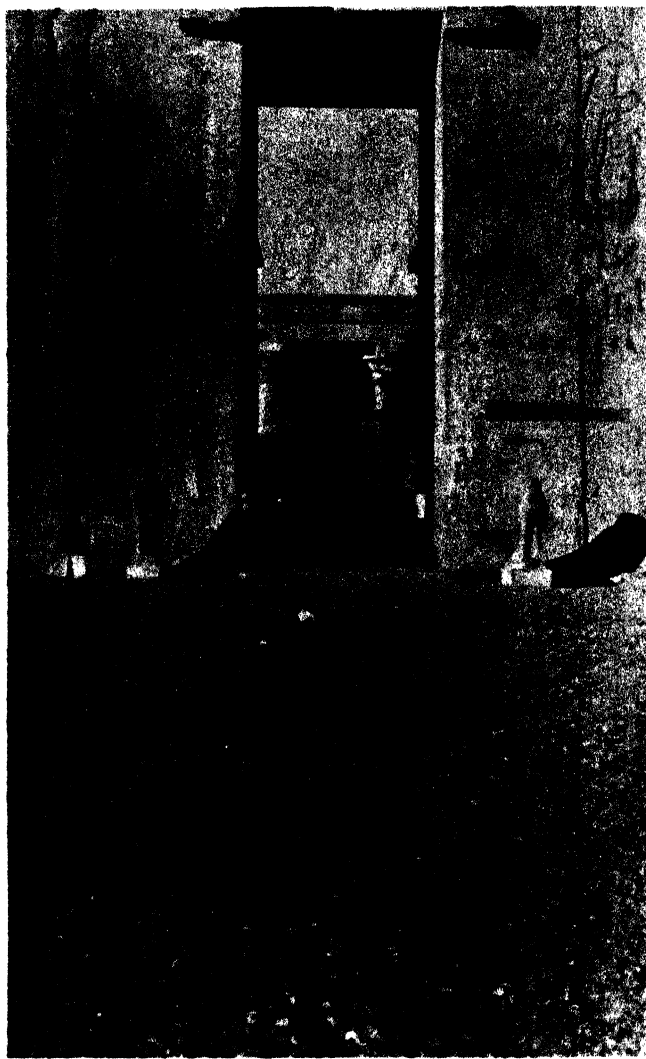
under ideal conditions, except that the people of Edfu themselves were inclined to be quarrelsome ; at least the donkey-boys and the sheikh in charge of them were. The sad part was that when the quarrel grew fiercest it was each other's donkey which they whacked instead of each other !

The sun shone clear and bright, the sky was cloudless, and after a bumpy drive, owing to the practically non-existent springs of our car, through the interesting native town of Edfu, we crossed a canal and arrived safely at the temple dedicated to Horus, the god of the morning sun, whose emblem, two colossal hawks in granite, stand before the pylon.

This is the most perfectly preserved temple on the Nile. It was begun in 450 B.C. and finally finished in the year 250 before the Christian era, being built by the Ptolemies, the great kings who reigned in Egypt for several hundred years.

What a blessing for later times it is that the debris of centuries had covered it, for having emerged from its dusty grave, eyes of the twentieth century behold a temple built on the old Egyptian model, perfect in plan and in proportion.

The majestic pylon from which the festival flags flew, the wide open court for the people, the pillared peristyle for the nobles, lighted by the square doorway leading out of the court, the dimly lighted hypostyle hall of the priests from the paved floor of which many pillars rise, thereby giving the



Temple of Horus, Edfu

idea of a dark forest through which the King and the High Priest must walk, having come from daylight into the gloaming, until, braving the utter darkness, they stand before the granite shrine in the holy of holies. You must allow a little for poetic licence. Of course, there must have been some method of lighting, although there is no sign of smoke on the walls, and it is wondered whether they used lamps and in them burned oil made from date palm or crude castor oil mixed with salt, both of which are smokeless.

To come back to sober fact, this shrine, carved of one solid block of grey granite with hieroglyphics front and back, had bronze doors, within it stood the golden figure of the god of light : at one time a live hawk, the symbol of the god, was kept there.

In front of the shrine there is a block of stone, on which the sacred barque, with the image of the hawk-headed god, once rested.

It was believed that if neither the image of the god nor the live bird were there the spiritual presence of the god was verily behind those closed bronze doors.

Behind and around the holy of holies were numbers of small rooms, with reliefs of kings and gods from floor to ceiling. There was no possibility of their being seen without torches and magnesium wire, which George and Peter lighted from time to time, for they were " all dark, dark, dark, amid

the blaze of noon." In some of them the temple treasures were kept, others were small sanctuaries for the worship of other gods who might come to visit Horus.

Some of the carvings on the girdle wall, between which and the wall of the temple processions used to pass, are entertaining and full of interest.

The temple, as I told you, is dedicated to Horus, and so on these walls is carved the victory of Horus, the hawk-headed god of light, over Set, the god of darkness, who is represented as a hippopotamus. At first the fight is furious, but gradually the ascendancy of Horus is proved, the hippopotamus is shown getting smaller and ever smaller until finally Horus, in a one-sailed boat, spears the fat little beast, who calmly rolls over, gives up the ghost and suffers the last degradation by being dragged along with a chain round his neck.

On these walls also are carven, the praises and prayers used in the sacred procession, and the procession itself, headed by the king, behind whom come the priests of the temple, wearing the distinctive hawk head-dress of the priesthood of Horus.

We were shown the ancient staircase leading to the Nilometer, a well which had an underground connection with the Nile.

One of our party, a young American girl, dismissed the subject very rapidly with the remark : " Waal, what of it? We have lots of those in Ammurica."

In the temples at Abydos, Karnak and Luxor we had seen the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt worshipping the gods they stand before, in pride of birth ; as Egyptians worshipping the gods of Egypt and in turn being worshipped as gods themselves ; but when conquerors from other lands laid Egypt under their heel it was necessary for them to receive a welcome and a crown from the gods of the land they had taken, and so on these walls at Edfu and at Dendera we see sculptured the crowning of the kings by the gods and thereby receiving a divine imprimatur. Thus they not only identified themselves with the gods of the conquered land but also asserted their own kingly authority.

So Ptolemy is shown, crowned as a conqueror in the dress of the Egyptian Pharaoh and also in that of a King of Greece, the land of his birth.

We had learnt much as we pursued our way along the ambulatory, and still following the wake of those processions of old we ascended a flight of two hundred steps, which wound its way within the first pylon, until we reached the roof itself and were able to obtain a fine view of the surrounding country. We looked down upon the town of Edfu and saw the village school, a sure sign of the progress of the times, and not far away the new pumping station built by a British firm, by means of which water is raised from the Nile by electricity and the desert for some distance is flooded—thus

corn, wheat, maize and sugar-cane now grow where before was an arid waste. Progress again.

But the broad waters of the Nile still flowed on unheeding, and at our feet lay the temple, spread out beneath us ; its open court surrounded by pillars, its covered courts narrowing to the holy of holies, and I tried to picture the scene which might have met my gaze a few hundred years before the Christian era.

Pilgrims would be gathered in the court beneath, a sound of chanting would be heard as the procession of priests bearing the golden god would pass along the ambulatory and would grow louder and more distinct as they mounted the stairway, resting for a few moments in the small rooms built at twelve different stages of the way, until with a final burst of music and singing they reached the platform on which I stood.

There they would present the image of the god to his father, the Sun, and in silence show him to the adoring crowds below.

As always,

Yours, —

XVII

KOMOMBO

Dear Ones,

Are you tired of being "modern"? I am afraid I cannot help it even if you are, for once again I have to tell you about a temple begun by the Greek Ptolemies in 180 B.C. and finished by the Romans, early in the third century A.D., a period of close on four hundred years.

I didn't realise it until I began to think it over that while this temple at Komombo was being built some of the most momentous events in the World of Time were being enacted.

It is one of the most beautifully situated temples on the Nile, and is on the borders of Nubia, which, by the way, means "gold," but where the people are very black and smile at you with very white teeth and sparkling eyes.

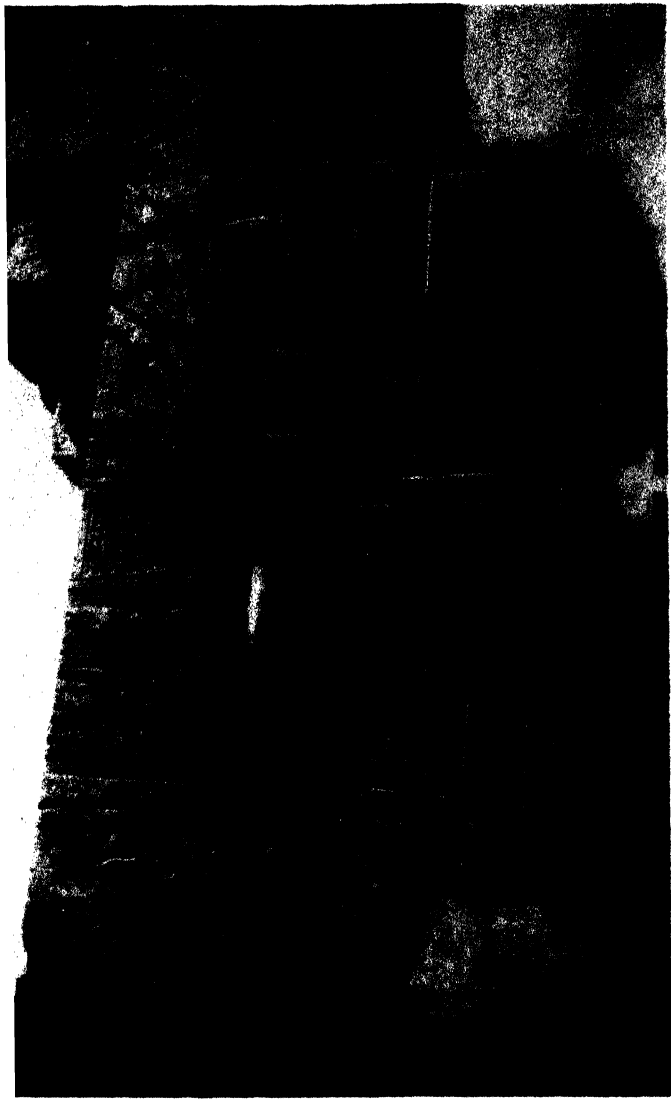
Another advantage, from my point of view, is that it is one of the few temples on this lower reach of the great river to which you can walk, being only a few minutes across the sand from the place where the boat is moored.

Black children with curly hair, and old men, very patriarchal-looking, solemnly form up in two lines as the party steps off the gangway, anxious to sell "anteekas," or queer fans of brilliant colours, made of cotton material, which you may buy to use as need or fancy suggests : to soothe the fevered brow by gentle swaying to and fro, or vindictively to switch flies with, like the rattles farmers' boys used to be given to frighten crows away from the cornfields.

Komombo is so beautifully placed that all the amateur photographers got into all sorts of impossible positions to snap it at the best angle and in the best light.

This temple is extraordinary because it has a double dedication, to Horus, the god of light, as at Edfu, and also to Sebekh, the god of darkness. The Hawk and the Crocodile !

Although we had seen the fine carving of a remote age at Abydos, graceful Hathor-headed columns at Dendera, a temple complete as the house of a god at Edfu : although we had seen the grandeur of the city of a god at Karnak, and history unrolled during the centuries at Luxor, we had failed to find beauty of colouring save for a few suggestions of fast-fading green, red, blue and yellow. But at Komombo there is more than suggestion. Some of the colouring is still bright on the walls and pillars, and helps to give an idea of the brilliance of these temples, covered



Relief showing Surgical Instruments. Temple at Komombo.

from roof to floor with birds, animals and gods painted in the colours of the rainbow, to eyes accustomed to the greys and russet hues of English cathedrals.

Dedicated to the mysterious gods of the light and the darkness there were two sanctuaries, but behind both there was a hidden staircase down which the priest went into an inner chamber, from a window in which he could look out into the crocodile god's temple and also into that of Horus, and might perhaps preach the same sermon to the worshippers of light and darkness !

There are all kinds of interesting things I can tell you about this temple but I am afraid they will be rather jumbled up. However, if any of you ever visit Komombo you will know what to look for.

On the skirting wall is carved a complete set of surgical instruments, some of which are little different from those used to-day, except for one gruesome object. Among the necessary instruments there is a club—grim reminder of the days when, anæsthetics being unknown, the poor patient was banged into unconsciousness instead of falling into a deep sleep. I haven't asked a doctor if this would be a possibility. I am merely telling you of the appearance of a club in the surgeon's list of necessities.

Im-hotep, here represented as the god of

medicine, seems to have been an interesting person. The priests who rebuilt the temple at Edfu under Ptolemy claimed that they were reproducing the structure which formerly stood there, and had been built according to the plans of this great man who lived in the time of King Zoser. Wise in priestly wisdom, in magic, in medicines, in architecture, Im-hotep's reputation became so enhanced that two thousand five hundred years after his death he became the god of medicine whom the Greeks identified with their own Æsculapius.

Im-hotep, the god of medicine, is carved here, before whom the King kneels in supplication for the recovery of his sight. I don't know which Ptolemy it was who was threatened with blindness ; perhaps one of you do.

Among the fruit on a table of offerings there is carved one small pear-shaped fruit speckled with seeds ; it looks like a strawberry, so I suppose the ancients used to enjoy strawberries and cream even as we do.

Our nice engineer, who said he loved wandering round this temple each time the boat put in, as each time invariably he found something new of interest, asked me if I had seen " Cleopatra's scooter." I followed gravely and was shown in a relief the flat length of wood on little wheels which the ancients used as a battering-ram ! But it will always remain in my mind as " Cleopatra's

scooter," and I pictured the lively queen having a gorgeous time in the palace overlooking the Mole at Alexandria !

The god of writing is carved here " wishing the King many happy years," evidently a sort of birthday greeting, but in spite of all this, remember that Komombo alone records the fact that human beings were offered as sacrifices to the crocodile god, who was always feared and worshipped in deprecation, and whose mummified remains we saw in a little room away from the main temple. These small crocodiles, teeth and all, were as hard as a rock and looked as if they had been fossilised in the far, far distant past.

We were shown two wells on the temple terrace in which we were told the sacred crocodile was kept. I imagined it was to localise the deity in case the feared crocodiles in the river should make secret ravages on the natives when the services of propitiation might be of no avail.

There are also reliefs showing a lion beside the King calmly eating the hand of a prisoner ! and another of birds, on tall reeds and rushes which have been covered with bird-lime, fluttering and spreading their wings in the endeavour to fly away from the snare of the hunter, while a cat creeps up the stalks after them. Birds and crocodiles don't seem to have much connection, and yet the

spur-winged plover is called the crocodile's dentist. He has two sharp spurs on his wings or shoulders, and he sits in the crocodile's open mouth and cleans his teeth, but when the crocodile is tired and "the roof" is about to come down, the plover reminds him of his existence by means of his spurs.

There are lots of legends about birds in Egypt. When I remember I will sometimes give you one or two in a letter. Here, however, is one about the plover. It is said that Allah told all things great and small to come to a great feast. All came except the plover. Allah rebuked him. Eager to make an excuse, the plover had the audacity to say that he had fallen asleep and forgotten the engagement. Now, Allah, who knows all things, knew that he lied, and answered: "From this time thou shalt know no sleep," and caused spurs to grow so that he would suffer pain whenever "he hides his head under his wing, poor thing!" Now put the two stories together and you will see how evenly good and evil, punishments and rewards, are balanced in the bird world.

Komombo seems to be full of animals and birds in my mind. As I was turning away after having tried to drink in the beauty of this temple, as it stands silently on the bank where the river bends, an exquisite reminder of days long since dead and of a worship long forgotten, George touched me and pointed out a fragment of

KOMOMBO

carving which shows a bird flying towards a star, and explained that Egyptians two thousand years ago would have seen in that the symbol of the soul leaving the earth and reaching upwards to the sky.

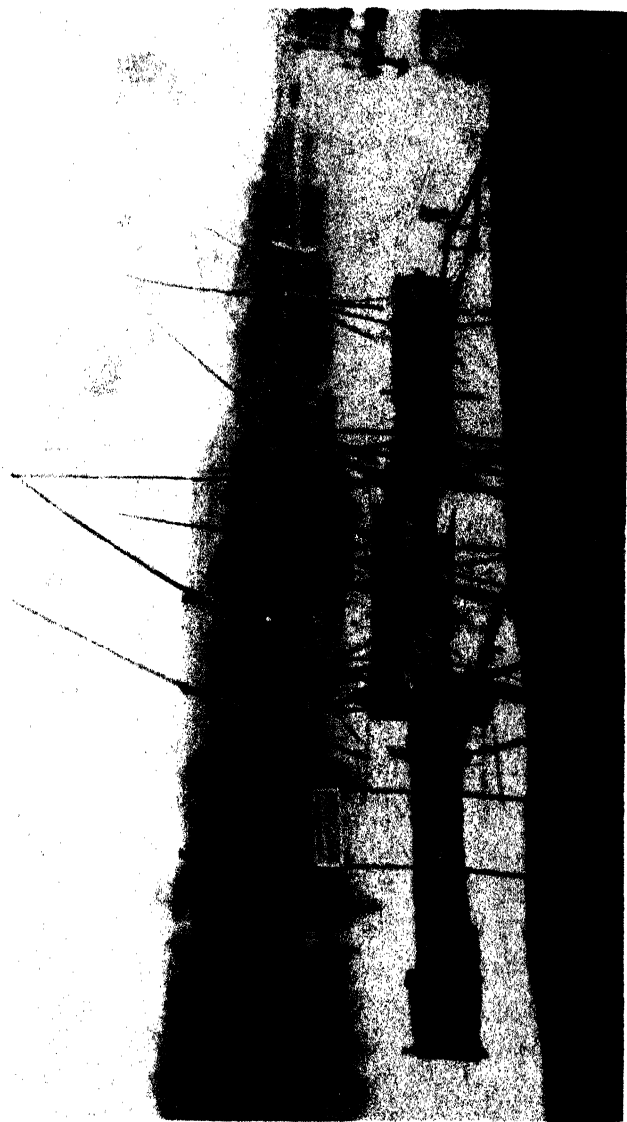
Yours, ——

XVIII

ASSOUAN

Dear Ones,

The golden sun slipped down behind the desert hills leaving a primrose radiance on the horizon which deepened into blue above our heads: the Nile, a broad stream of silver, lazily swept down towards the sea hundreds of miles away after having had its course rudely barred by the black rocks forming the Cataract. The hush which follows the sunset fell upon the gay throng of tea-drinkers on the terrace of the Cataract Hotel at Assouan. The great sun-god was demanding reverence from his worshippers, and then a girl laughed and the spell was broken. My pen, like her tongue, is loosed and I can begin to write freely. The days of our stay in this hotel, built to catch sun's rays from early morn to sunset glow, have just drifted by. Most mornings we have been energetic and gone for a walk, in the afternoon have sun-baked on our veranda until four o'clock, when, suitably attired, we have joined society on the terrace for tea.



The Nile at Assouan

There were two cities here. Assouan, on the east side of the river, the centre of commerce and of a great quarrying industry, was also a frontier station. Elephantine, on the opposite bank, was the religious and military centre.

By some you are told that the name Elephantine was given to it because the island itself was shaped like an elephant. Certainly I could see no resemblance and wondered, especially as I had read that the town so called was not an island long ago : then I read that it may have been so named because of the title of one of the princes who ruled the district for the kings of the early Empire, while another writer said that in all probability a tribe living here adopted the elephant as their totem or emblem.

The ancient Elephantine of the Egyptians no longer exists except for a few ruins hidden in a mud village. There is an interesting little museum on the island in which mummies and burials from a very early age are shown and some mummified rams found in the ruins of one of the temples. The Nilometer for gauging the height of the river is beside the landing stage ; this particular one is said to date from the time of the Roman occupation, and may have usurped the place of one still older.

Assouan, or Elephantine, call it which you will, has always been a place of manly men from the days of five thousand years ago when Herkuf and his descendants ruled the borderland, to the days

when the Roman Conquerors held it as an outpost of Empire, right up to the times when Lord Kitchener planted a garden on one of the islands.

I have rambled on and have touched as with a wand each of the particular interests at Assouan, always excluding the Dam and Philæ.

Tombs, fortress, quarries and gardens, which shall it be first? Tombs, I think, and don't imagine they are going to be "just tombs" because they are not the houses of dead men, but give a living record of the bravery and filial affection of those "who being dead yet speak!"

One morning we sailed down the river tacking this way and that to catch the rather whimsical breeze, to the foot of a sandy hill, with long stone staircases leading up to the tombs hollowed out of the rock, above which was the white dome of a sheikh's tomb.

I believe from some part of this upper ridge the Nubian Highway of great paving-stones can be traced for a short distance, but we found the climb to the tombs sufficient, although a diminutive boy assisted us to mount the steep steps. At any rate this is easier than being obliged to clamber up the sandy hill with no foothold at all, and arriving too hot and bothered either to enjoy the view from this lofty height or to be interested in these very ancient tombs.

We went into three or four of them—known by

the guide not by their names but by numbers. First, let me explain they are all cut out of the rock and consist of one or more square rooms supported by columns ; the burial shaft being at the far end, reached by a long passage or corridor. The square court of the first tomb, that of Mekhu, has eighteen pillars, and between two of them there is a table of offerings for the departed, which reminded me of a cromlech on the moors of Cornwall, or in a much smaller way of Stonehenge, for it was a mighty slab of stone laid across two upright ones.

Adjoining this tomb is another with square pillars cut out of the rock itself, and on the walls are carved scenes in the daily life of the dead man ; scenes which show him spearing flat fish, shooting wild duck, while seated between his feet as he stands astride in the fragile boat, is his wife unconcernedly smelling a lotus flower. Perhaps she, like me, hated the smell of dead fish. This is the tomb of Sabni, son of Mekhu. Keep it in your mind, for I shall mention him again.

These tombs are cut out of black rock, and then, walking only a short way along a sandy platform, we came to two others, which are cut out of sandstone, coloured in bands like the cliffs at Alum Bay in the Isle of Wight. One of them is the tomb of Sirenput, Superintendent of the Priests of Khnum ! There are square pillars in the entrance hall, and then we went up one or two steps and

along a corridor, on either side of which were three figures of the wrapped mummy, guarding the way to the little square alcove with walls washed blue, whereon was painted the offering table and before it a red figure of the prince with a small boy behind him.

Beyond again there is another tomb, very little different from this but having a very interesting tomb stele outside it, saying that it is the tomb of Herkuf.

This is only a very poor description of the fine houses built for their souls by a hardy family of adventurous barons who served the Pharaohs of the Sixth Dynasty (about 3000 B.C.) faithfully and well, whose records live unto this day. Very attractive, faithful men they seem to have been, loyal to one another and to their king, and for whom King Menere, son of Pepi I, originated a new title, calling them "Keepers of the Door of the South," by which all men understood that it was their commission to hold the Valley of the Cataract against the turbulent tribes of Northern Nubia, and to establish unbroken connection by water with the granite quarries of Assouan and mines of Nubia. They were also responsible for bringing rich caravans of ostrich feathers, ebony, panther skins, ivory, and, from the more distant Eastern desert, myrrh, gums, resins and aromatic woods. For this they had a still further title; besides being "Lords of Elephantine and Keepers of the Door of

the South " they were called also "Caravan Conductors who bring products of the countries to their lord the King." This is all told by pictures and hieroglyphics proudly displayed in the tombs of Mekhu, Sabni and Herkuf, but as well there is a very human side, and these men begin to live before our eyes.

Outside the tomb of Herkuf there is inscribed part of a letter with instructions which he received from King Pepi II, who succeeded to the throne of the Pharaohs as a child. Hearing that Herkuf was returning from Yam with a rich pack-train and was also bringing a dwarf from one of the pigmy tribes of Inner Africa, the child was thrilled and sent instructions to him to have him carefully watched, two men were to be beside him when he slept, two when he walked the deck of the ship, lest he should fall overboard, and two when he fed—in fact the dwarf was never to be left alone. The treasures being brought apparently weighed as nothing against the safe arrival of this very ugly little person, probably very like the squat statue standing in one of the rooms in the Cairo Museum to this day. So we know that Herkuf did not fail in his trust. And then there is a touch of grandeur and pathos, for also inscribed on the front of the tomb of this greatest of early African explorers is a prayer, as if the thought of his last journey into the undiscovered country was a little terrifying, in spite of the fact that he was conscious

of his own integrity. "O ye living, who are upon earth who shall pass by this tomb whether going down stream or going up stream who shall say 'a thousand loaves, a thousand jars of beer for the owner of this tomb,' I will intercede for their sakes in the nether world."

In the tomb of Sabni is told the story of a son's devotion. His father, Mekhu, had been killed on one of these expeditions for the King, and the body had been left in the desert. Sabni, for his father's sake, travelled o'er desert and river to find and bring back the revered remains in order to preserve his body and soul for eternal life, and wonderful to relate after many adventures succeeded in doing so. On the tomb of this faithful son is written the prayer: "Hail, living ones, all you who are upon earth, who are happy, you who make to flourish your professions for your children, say a prayer for the soul of Sabni."

Human nature does not change much during five thousand years. We don't make the appeal so openly, perhaps because we trust the generations of men less—and the unseen God more.

As we came out of these dark tombs with their living history it was easy to picture the long line of heavily burdened camels, sometimes I believe there were as many as eight hundred in a caravan, as well as unnumbered donkeys led by strong and straight men and guarded by soldiers coming over the silent desert, from the East and from the South;

and the busy line of quays along the river from which the great granite blocks were shipped on large flat barges for Gizeh, Memphis and for Thebes.

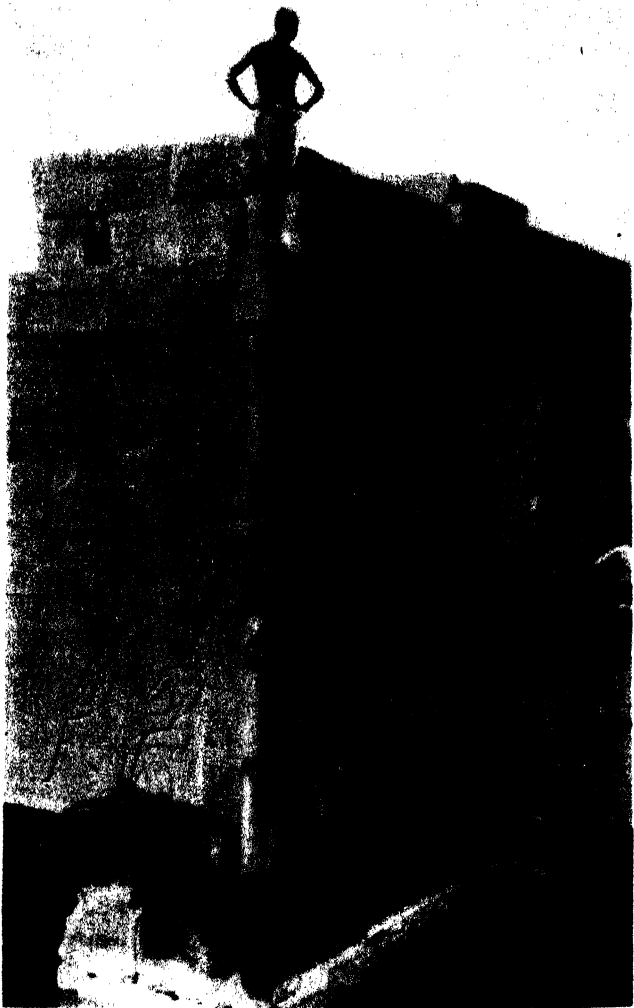
Another day, we went for a walk on the brown desert hills, southward towards the Dam—passing first the camel hospital, then through a deserted village and on towards the ruins of a Roman fort composed of various towers joined by a wall. The air was wonderful, clear and energising, we felt as if we had walked for about ten minutes and found it was more than an hour since we had started from the hotel. Personally, I love walking and would always advocate it, but if you don't, or if you can't, at any rate go on "other legs," a donkey or a horse, so as not to miss drinking in the desert air, and your eyes, too, will grow clearer as you gaze into the far distances unspoilt by the habitations and haunts of mortal men. I always feel like this when in the desert or thinking back on it, but that day I fell with a crash out of my beautiful imaginings. I had been poking about these ruins and found many bits of ancient-looking glass, and also among the stones the remains of a black pot. Turning over a bit of the broken lip I discovered under it some straw and what might have been bones. Thrilled, I imagined a Roman burial-urn and pictured some soldier buried here, in exile, during the occupation in the first century A.D., but I was promptly brought to earth by the remark

“ Rubbish ! Probably a pot used by Arabs for cooking that snared sheep whose skull we saw on the hill ”—and was told that in all probability the bits of heliotrope glass belonged to the bottles of picnic parties. All of which I was ready to admit, but I preferred to think of the legionary who had watched the rainbow sunset on these hills reflected in the river and whose heart had ached for that other city of wonderful sunsets on the Tiber.

But there are other things to see and do at Assouan. We drove to the quarries from which the great Builder Pharaohs had the red granite hewn for the obelisks, pillars, monumental gateways and colossal statues with which they adorned their temples, both up and down the Nile ; and saw the huge obelisk lying where it had been quarried some three thousand years ago, left there because of a flaw in the stone.

One of the most delightful ways of spending a morning is to take a boat and sail between the islands, visiting especially that one which is called “ Kitchener’s Island.” Here the great soldier had planted trees, shrubs and flowers which he had picked up in his different campaigns.

It was a case of history repeating itself to a certain extent, for two great soldiers, the Pharaohs Mentuhotep II and Thothmes III had also planted gardens filled with flowers and trees which they had brought back from the lands of their conquests.



Man preparing to dive from Temple at Philae

We had seen the fossilised roots of these trees brought to Deir-el-Bahari by Mentuhotep, and from the delicate carving on the walls of a room at Karnak, had gained an idea of the trees, birds, flowers and rushes which Thothmes had brought back to adorn the garden of the great temple.

And still I have not mentioned the Dam, that mighty piece of engineering which harnesses the great river and then releases its saving waters for the betterment of agriculture in the Nile Valley. Let me tell you it is to the south of Assouan and can be reached by a good road or by boat, and leave it at that.

It is not beautiful, and will in time be the doom of lovely Philae, the sacred island of the Ptolemies and the Romans, on which they built several temples, in particular the great temple of Isis, which, owing to the fact that Abydos had fallen into decay, usurped the temple of Osiris as a place of pilgrimage.

It has many interesting reliefs carved on its walls showing the Greek kings and Roman emperors making offerings to Osiris, Isis, and the child Horus.

The waters of the Nile now leap round even the cornices and the capitals of the temple, and in time the temple reputed to be built over one of the members of the mutilated body of Osiris will sink for ever into a grave from which there is little

hope of resurrection. The same fate will overtake the building, in form perhaps rather like a much ornamented four-poster. The four blocks at each corner of the cornice, it is thought, were to have been carved into sistrum capitals with Hathor heads, to keep off evil spirits, I suppose, but they were left unfinished.

It had never struck me before, but having seen what is called "the Cenotaph of Seti," near the temple of Osiris at Abydos, my lively imagination suggested that "Pharaoh's bed" was the cenotaph of Trajan, the Roman Emperor who held more than a conqueror's reverence for the gods of old Egypt, and wished to lie near this blessed spot; for the reliefs on the screen wall, only two of which were ever completed, show him burning incense before Osiris and Isis and offering wine to Isis and Horus.

Assouan is called "the pearl of the Nile." She is beautiful almost beyond compare, and can we say there is no cause for tears or lamentation when in the future, we shall sail over her sacred isle and look down upon the temples, hidden like some mermaid's palace, beneath the clear green waters of the Nile?

All who know me will understand that this is not written from the archæologist's point of view, who say that the complete submersion of Philæ is not so important as it would have been if it had been a temple of an earlier date, nor from

ASSOUAN

the practical point of view with its promise of increased land for cultivation, but is simply the wail of a beauty-lover who mourns the loss of fair Philae.

In tears,
Yours, ——

XIX

UPPER NILE, ASSOUAN TO WADY HALFA

My Dears,

Now begins a thrill ! A week on the Nile from Shellal to Wady Halfa, from the First Cataract to the Second, passing through the rocky gorge of Kalabsha, ending at the peaceful banks at Halfa which are laid out with terraces of flowers, chiefly sunflowers and cosmeas of different shades from white to pink and pink to crimson. The red flag with white crescent of Egypt gives place to the Union Jack of old England. As usual I have got to the end of my story almost before making a beginning. The *Thebes*, on board which we had travelled twice before, was just as spick and span as ever. The manager, a big man with a name "difficult to remember," and the little white-haired engineer, whose speech betrayed him as a native of the grey hills of Scotland, gave us a hearty welcome. We were glad to find that "the long and the short of it" were in charge of us this year as last, and that in the saloon, too, measurements still counted, for we had the same obliging

“ narrow ” European steward with his attendant satellites, the broad dark men of Nubia who, like tall Agrippas, seem “ almost to touch the sky,” viz. the ceiling of the saloon, with their white turbans. They wear long white robes with red sashes.

The cabins, like those on the *Sudan*, are comfortably furnished, with a place for everything—veritably shipshape, each with its own electric fan and electric heater. The latter we did not require, for on some days the temperature reading was over 90 degrees.

Last year we went first to the granite quarries from the S.S. *Sudan*, and saw the unfinished obelisk lying where the workmen left it over three thousand years ago, and then drove on across the brown desert, past the new aeroplane station, and were deposited in white boats with cheery brown boatmen who sang as they rowed us towards the once beautiful temple of Philae. I suppose I am wrong in saying “ once beautiful ” because it is still beautiful, but each year less of its beauty can be seen, until, I believe, when the final raising of the dam is accomplished, Philae will be like a mermaid’s palace beneath the silent waters of the Nile. Afterwards we were taken to view the modern wonders of the Dam and then, under a burning sun, were rowed towards the *Thebes*. This time we drove straight across the desert to the *Thebes* accompanied by a lady of eighty-one who had

flown from Alexandria to Cairo ! I am beginning to think that the present generation should take its hat off to the passing one.

As soon as we were all on board luncheon was served, and we slipped away through the gorge of Kalabsha.

The sky was a deep blue, the rocks brown, well-nigh black, rose from the golden sand ; the pale green waters of the Nile seemed clearer up here—veritably *eau de Nil* in colour.

Blue, black, gold and green—those are the colours which rise before me as I write, while we stream lazily along.

Somehow this gay tourist steamer seems an intruder on the river which

“ Flows through old hushed Egypt and its sands
Like some grave mighty thought.”

All is solemn, dignified and calm. There is no sound, no life, and yet it does not impress you as an empty world but as a world of immense spaces—where the air blows clear from the heart of things, and we all are very small and insignificant. As after the first days of Creation, man appeared upon the earth, so the jagged rocks gave way to kinder ones on which man might build and have his habitation, and little mud houses with domed roofs appeared, some in a courtyard, others separated, having the corn-bins and the grindstones on each side of the wooden door. Over



Results of inundation, Upper Nile

many of them were china plates and saucers which looked as if they had been bought at Woolworth's and had been set in the walls and over the doors as ornaments. Some of the houses had bright green doors and shutters, others—the owners apparently wishing to get away from the drabness of things—were washed white and picked out in blue.

It struck me as being a childlike world, not long fresh from the hand of the Creator. Below Assouan and at Assouan itself the world was old. Here somehow the world was young. To these simple Nubians the triumph of engineering shown at the Dam had meant farewell to their homes. Since last year many of these self-respecting little villages and all the houses which composed them have disappeared beneath the greedy waters of the great river which have been harnessed at the Dam and are kept waiting in Nubia during the winter until they are released when the Nile is low. There are scenes of desolation all the way up the river. Derr, the capital of Nubia as it was when we walked through it only last year to visit the temple, is no more ; some of the houses have completely gone, others still stand roofless, with holes like empty eye-sockets where windows and doors once were, watching the water gradually creep up, until they too will sink beneath the flood. Palm trees, mimosa trees full of golden blossom which cast tall shadows and shed a sweet perfume as we walked across the golden sand to

the Temple of Wady Saboa only last year, now appear to be giant water-plants lifting their heads out of the swelling tide.

I must stop this and change the subject, or you will be getting swamped with my tears for a vanishing Nubia on the banks of the Nile.

Rather an amusing thing happened. I was talking to the black boy this morning. Of course, as you know, no word of Arabic is mine, so the conversation took place in his pidgin-English, with expressive gestures and helped out by guess-work from me. I gathered what he meant and I expect you can too.

He said: "My home Gerf Hussein—last," and then solemnly pointed down saying, "plenty—plenty water." Then, lifting his hand he swept along the horizon—"My home now plenty up."

I had noticed that many of the little villages which at one time nestled amid green vegetation on the Nile banks had now been built "plenty up!" carrying on exactly the same traditions in building and arrangement.

We saw long-legged storks standing on a sandy island in the river, and flocks of birds flying over the waters. Kingfishers are not the gorgeous birds dressed in bright blue and green which you know in England, but are in half-mourning with black and white plumage. The dragon-flies too are Cinderellas in drab-coloured kitchen clothes instead of being clad in brilliant colours for the ball!

The donkeys are white and grey, the camels, which, by the way, are the swiftest of camels, are very light fawn colour, in fact almost white. But if in Nubia and the Sudan the birds, flies, animals are neutral in colour, the people wear gayer clothes than those who live lower down the river.

Women and children instead of being dressed like widows with long, trailing black dresses and veils, are here clad in gayer hues, red, magenta, and yellow, but I will tell you more about that when I describe our night in the desert.

Foot by foot the greedy water is creeping up. We saw several heavy-prowed sailing boats tied to palm trees, already isolated, and gathered down by the water's edge a disconsolate group of men, women, goats, children, hens and dogs, with a few bits of furniture, a tent, a few pots, a wooden bed, and matting, waiting to be packed into the boat and transferred to newly built houses on the western side of the river. Those big river boats, usually laden with grain, have been doing a roaring trade as Carter Paterson's or White's removal vans. Some women, like Lot's wife, have been loth to leave their homes until the very last moment, and the water was lapping round the walls before they had given the order to sail across to the other side. And some who, from life lived with the great river in front of them and the desert behind them, wished to live the life of the town, came down to new houses which had

been built for them outside Assouan. It reminded me of slum clearance reversed. Wooden doors and window frames are precious possessions to dwellers in mud huts, so doors and windows were counted among their worldly possessions. I was told it was a sight never to be forgotten to see one of the small steamers, commissioned generally to carry three hundred passengers, laden with eight hundred men, women, children, bundles and window frames and doors. Where they had been put, there they must stay until the boat landed them at Shellal. There they must sit until the homes they had come to were ready for them.

This letter is all of to-day ; another will tell of Yesterday.

Yours, ——

XX

UPPER NILE, ASSOUAN TO WADY HALFA

My Dear,

You are the gay and lively one of the family so your respectable aunt, as you used to call me when "you were very young," is going to write you about some of the amusing and thrilling incidents which happened during our week in Nubia.

This is pure gossip, not unkind, but I want to give you a bird's eye glimpse of our "*compagnons de voyage*." They remind me of chessmen, each playing his part and being moved as my fancy suggests. There are several knights, nice business men on holiday from the Old Country and the New. Men who have travelled in all parts of the world, garnering experiences from the countries they have seen, but mostly "very gentil knights." One in particular, from overseas, who particularly wanted a snapshot of a little black nigger at Abou Simbel, but the baby face was too sad and perplexed to make a happy picture. So this knight got off the boat, camera in hand, and was immediately surrounded by a crowd of little imps. They were

brushed away and he stood in front of the tragic one. We were watching from the deck. First he capered about, the baby stared ; then he jumped, the baby still stared ; he laughed and sang, the baby still stared. It seemed hopeless when a chance accident got him the picture. His hat slipped and his glasses fell off, and the icy calm was broken, and a row of gleaming white teeth showed and the curly head was coquettishly put on one side, and the infant of Abou Simbel was snapped !

You know, dear, what an evil habit I have of nicknaming people. There was one man of our party, tall, sedate, with "a presence" whom I wickedly called "the Bishop." But one day, on coming back from an expedition he slipped when going down the bank and fell flat on his back, and most unepiscopal language ensued.

And there was a White Queen on board as well ; one of those delightful women whose hearts run away with their heads where children are concerned, and who whenever she went ashore distributed largess to the distraction of the ship's manager and to the worry of passengers less blessed with this world's goods. Crowds of children and beggars always followed her. Talking of beggars, another amusing incident happened at Abou Simbel. There is one, an old man, dumb and of the age of Methuselah, who always makes his appearance, like the dogs, as soon as Cook's or any of the



‘Infant’ of Abou Simbel

other Nile steamers come in sight, with a dirty bag of blue cotton slung over his back in which he carries away enough "bits" to last him until the boat's return trip. What he does in the summer I don't profess to know, but he is called "a prince of beggars." Well, this old man was squatting on the river bank waiting, a group of natives surrounding him, playing tricks on him in order to rouse him to anger and to laying round upon them with his thick staff. It was all carried on in quite a friendly spirit until the old man caught sight of a rival—a man with shaggy hair and beard, naked except for a dirty loin-cloth, carrying a sort of shepherd's crook and a bag, who had stolen up close to the boat hoping also to get some "leavings." "The prince" grunted and called in that inhuman way which the dumb have, and tried to beat the bare back of the other beggar in order to keep him off his preserves. This, of course, added great zest to the villagers' amusement, who egged him on to fury. I felt rather sorry for the worsted one—worsted but not clothed—until I was told that he owned several camels and many sheep in the desert and was, in fact, one of the desert's "wealthy ones."

Now, let us move on towards Wady Halfa. As I told you in my previous letters in *Twenty-four*, Halfa, a clean little town, owns a museum over which flies the Union Jack, whose custodian is an old servant of Lord Kitchener, a barracks and sports

club, but the chief attractions from a tourist's point of view are the two interesting excursions made from it during the two days that the *Thebes* lies alongside the bank of the river, which is gay with sunflowers and cosmeas. One is the excursion of a day, the other of a night. We were particularly fortunate in both of them, "the two great lights, the greater ruled that day and the lesser ruled that night."

First for the day excursion. We all walked down the gangway of the *Thebes*, a little way along the bank and up the gangway to the *Sudan*, one of the Sudan Government boats which draws less water than the *Thebes* and so can go farther up the river.

When we were all on board we swung off and, after steaming some distance, passing the new hotel, which I am told is most comfortable, and the High Commissioner's house on the same side of the river, a ruined temple of Roman times on the other, we came to a shady bank with beans and lupins growing down to the water's edge. There we anchored and transhipped to a little motor boat, and sped up between the black rocks of the Second Cataract towards the sandy slope from which the Rock of Abusir juts out. The great excitement of the voyage was to see who could spot the most crocodiles and also snap them before they heard us and slid into the water. They were difficult to see, as they looked so exactly like the

rock beneath the sand on which they lay. I had visions of our gallant little boat toppling over, as everyone, armed with a camera, rushed to one side when the shout "crocodile" sounded. Wouldn't the crocodiles have enjoyed themselves? but the sturdy little boat pursued its way unperturbed, and we reached the place where we disembarked for a climb on foot, a donkey ride, or an ascent on a stately camel. You know, I much prefer Shanks' pony, so I and one of "the knights" took the mountain-side. The noise of the donkey boys and the groans of the camels were the accompaniment. It was rather stiff going, but two none too clean boys with bright smiles and two words of English came to my rescue and gallantly hauled me over the worst part until I stood upon the Rock of Abusir, and looked down towards the south as far as human eye can see upon broken black rocks over which the Nile swirls and eddies in fury. Then an order was given by a man, in a long green robe with a band round his arm on which the word "Sheikh" was embroidered, not the weird old man whom I had seen twice before, and about "ten little nigger boys" far below dived into the torrent and swam the rapids on animal skins blown up to act as floats. It was a curious sight to see the little black woolly heads jumping about like corks. They reached the shore safely, and then clambered up the sand and stood in a row for baksheesh, and also to be photographed.

THE GLAMOUR OF EGYPT

It was all so different from anything we had done before in our trip that everyone regretted having to return to Wady Halfa. The sun shone with such brilliance and brought the colours of the land into such vivid contrast one with another, that even the most prosaic and inartistic was touched by the beauty of it all ; the deep blue sky and the golden sand, untrodden by foot of man, the pale green of the river as it swirled over the black rocks and the handful of natives, some completely unadorned, some mere picturesque bundles of multi-coloured rags.

If any of you ever get a chance to do this trip, don't miss the Rock of Abusir. The air too is so invigorating that you are quite ready for the excellent cold luncheon provided for you on board the boat when you return, a little weary perhaps, if it has been very hot, but thoroughly pleased with life in general.

I have been told that only a fortnight after we were there, it was so cold that some of the people revelled in their fur coats all day.

And now for the thrill ! The night before we reached Wady Halfa, the big manager came into the dining saloon and said that there was an established camp in the desert, and that all who wished could, by paying a certain sum, go out there by camel or by car at sunset and that dinner would be served under the stars, also that any who liked could stay the night by paying extra. All

of the chessmen said they would go out to dinner but only eight said "we should like to stay the night." We were two of them, and as often happens we who took the leap in the dark were the envy of all those others who would venture nothing.

We drove out of Halfa for about three-quarters of an hour into the desert, and there found the camp. Eight bell tents arranged in a large circle, and two other large tents set aside as a dining room and a smoking room. My dear, you would have loved them. The tents were lined with tent-work in gorgeous colours and designs in red, yellow, blue, white and black. I said I wasn't quite sure if I were the Queen of Sheba or a Knight of the Crusades. I am certain that the great adventurers of long ago must have had something like it ; but as well as beauty, there was everything you needed—an iron bedstead with sheets and pillows, a washstand, a mirror and a dressing-table, but one thing was lacking, and that was a chair. I called one of the Sudanese "boys" and said I wanted a chair, thinking he must know a little English. He replied "All right," and proceeded to let down the door of the tent. I shouted "No," he then dashed off and produced two bottles of Evian water. It seemed hopeless, so I beckoned to him to follow, and going to a circle of derelict chairs which had been left there after the big party had gone, signed to him to carry one to the

tent. Evidently he thought it rather a good idea, for he promptly proceeded to take a chair to everyone else's tent.

We had dinner, not in a tent but under the stars, and after dinner a display of native dancing. The moon was so bright that only lamps at each end of the semicircle of the audience were necessary ; and a curious performance it was—black women with oiled hair hanging down in the tiniest plaits, were dressed in long satin dresses of brilliant rose, orange and turquoise with beautiful silk shawls of various colours and on their arms and ankles broad silver bands. These fascinating females swayed and postured, being followed by just ordinary native men in no distinctive dress, who clapped and sang in monotone as they followed like moths fluttering round a candle. They seemed to love it, but after a time we got very tired, for there was no variety in the time, music or action, except that occasionally one of the men caught one of the girls in his arms. He was speedily rejected, for she cast her castor-oiled plaits with a swish into his face ! All the time the moon looked down and the stars came out to watch ; somehow they froze the audience into silence. We gradually slipped away, preferring the peace and majestic silence of the desert to this weird native entertainment. If only some of the bright young things who think the modern dancing wonderful could see the prototype as danced by

natives, I believe they would feel rather ashamed and would gladly return to the good old waltz and polka of the days when I was very young.

Later, the steamer cavalcade started on its camels, and the seekers after adventure were left in the desert, guarded by one Sudanese soldier complete with rifle and turban ! We all sat and talked for a while and then once more the Silence called and we drifted away, leaving some of the party still talking. Suddenly a shriek broke the stillness and we saw a baby mouse scuttling over the sand, pursued by the gallant sentry with his gun who had dashed up on hearing a woman's cry.

The sands of the desert were like driven snow in the light of the moon. We turned in, but put the baby alarum at an hour before dawn. I think that was somewhere between four-thirty and five. Everyone else did the same, apparently, for it was a strange-looking company clad in night attire, supplemented by overcoats, which crept out from the tent doors to see the miracle of the dawn and to wait for the sun-rising. Can I describe it ? Not adequately, but if a few words can give you a picture, let me try.

A rosy glow in the east heralded a wonderful translucence, clear, pure unsullied light something like which Milton the blind had seen in vision when he sang "Hail, holy Light, offspring of Heaven new-born."

The brightness faded and for a moment a veil,

THE GLAMOUR OF EGYPT

grey and shadowy, hung over the desert as if in awe of the glory to come.

Once again a pink radiance showed, and suddenly the sun, a rim of gold, appeared on the horizon and then full circle he sped swiftly into the heavens and claimed the allegiance of the world.

Before I send this, let me tell you that we were trackers that morning. We walked round the tent looking at the tracks of those living creatures which had walked outside our tent during "the mid-hour of the night." Undoubtedly there were two tracks of animals, one larger than the other ; one may have been a coyote, which is, I believe, a little desert fox, and perhaps the other was a jackal. There were birds' tracks, too, probably all on the look-out for food, and then one curious track which looked like that of baby feet—of course, it couldn't have been—but I like to play with the thought that the New Year visited us that night in the desert when we seemed very near to the heart of things.

Yours, —

XXI

UPPER NILE, ASSOUAN TO WADY HALFA

My Dears,

I said that my last letter was chiefly of things of To-day. This one will rejoice your heart, I hope, for I am going to give you a little account of the various temples we have seen on our way up and down this reach of the Nile. Probably "reach" is not the right expression, but it sounds nice, for it takes you from Shellal to Wady Halfa, and also from the twentieth century back to about one thousand five hundred years before Christ, so write Yesterday large in your mind before beginning to read.

I am taking you with me on the *Thebes* and stopping at the temples we stopped at going up and then all those we saw on the return trip. You will notice that Abou Simbel appears each time, because it is one of the Wonders of my world, and is, I suppose, reckoned so by Messrs. Thomas Cook and Son, for they arrange their programme so that we see it at dawn, sunset and at night.

Our first port of call was Wady Saboa. Last year and five years ago we had tied up close to the river-bank and had walked through a small native village to the temple. It had been interesting because we had seen a woman kneading bread in the self-same way in which they had kneaded it five thousand years ago, kneeling on the ground with their arms stretched out in front of them. In one of the tombs of the Old Empire models had been found, and are now in the great treasure house in Cairo where we had seen them a week or two before. We had walked through a little shrubbery of castor-oil plants, and several of our party had also mounted a statuesque camel to be photographed. Little black children haunted us for baksheesh, and old, old men who looked as if they might have been born in the time of Abraham also stood by. I said Abraham, Aunt Lizzie, although he was not an Egyptian, because I guessed you would know that I meant very old, better than if I had said in the time of Thothmes or Rameses !

But all of these little excitements are over. The river was too high, flooding our ancient landing place, so we were rowed in the ship's boats and stepped out on to the sand, close to the temple. A double line of human-headed couching lions still led to it, built long ago by Rameses the Great. The stone guardians of the temple gateway are still impressive, even though the temple has lost

its primitive glory, and no longer waits to receive the King and the High Priest. Like many of the temples in Nubia, it is dedicated to Amen and Ra Harakte—Amen, the sun-god of Thebes, and Ra Harakte, the sun at its dawning. “In the morning and in the evening I will praise Thee,” says the Psalmist, and I can’t help feeling that these men in the land of the sun-god meant the same. This temple, called “of the Valley of the Lions,” has a curious history. Partly rock-hewn, partly built of sandstone, graven and coloured with scenes depicting the worship and also the battles of the King, it was regarded by the early Christians as a suitable place of worship, and so, after the old worship had fallen and the temple was left forlorn, they took it, and although they left it much as it had been they built a double doorway into the hall of the priests, through which women entered on one side and men on the other. Within the Holy of Holies they built the rounded apse of their sanctuary and adorned it with frescoes of the twelve Apostles, raising an altar there to the Redeemer of the World.

Over the sacred barque and ancient carvings of the Pharaoh before the various gods—Amen Ra, Ptah, Khonsu—they dabbed a coat of white-wash and on it painted some of the Saints. I particularly remember St. Peter, who appeared on the walls once or twice each time with two colossal keys in his right hand which reach beyond his

shoulder. Through the whitewash still appear the figures of the old gods. All is silent now, only visited once a week for a few months in the year by a crowd of sightseers from far-off lands, admitted by a black-robed guardian who says dominantly: "Monument tickets, please."

It is rather sad, isn't it? when you think of its history; the scene doubtless of great festivals and rejoicings, on whose walls are recorded the proud boast of Rameses: "My kingdom is established on three principles, Power, Justice, Light." Later resounding with the prayers of Christians to the Lord of all Power and Might, while St. Michael, Archangel of Light, looks down from his fading fresco, on what is now the haunt of bats and falcons.

Will you still come with the Temple Hounds, as a nice American woman called us last year?

Now, follow us to quite a small temple, which had a chequered history under the Pharaohs themselves. As far as I remember the great Amenhotep II built it, and caused twenty lines to be inscribed on the walls telling of how he himself slew seven Syrian kings. Thothmes III also worshipped here and placed his cartouche over that of Amenhotep, and later, Akhenaton, the heretic king, defaced the other cartouches and his own is written on its walls. Would you have liked to visit this temple during these periods? It must have been rather amusing to see the artists of

Thothmes carefully scratching away at Amen-hotep's name, blissfully unconscious, of course, that in a few short years, the like would happen to their Pharaoh and in turn to his successor. I noticed rather an interesting bit of ancient diplomacy. Rameses II had been having a troublesome time and I imagine wanted to make sure of the friendship of the Nubians, so in this temple Queen Nefertiti, his beautiful favourite wife, is drawn wearing the curled Nubian head-dress. So you can see or read in these stones something of the character of these men of long ago: jealous, impious, wise as serpents, but not harmless as doves. The temple is called Amada, for myself I pronounced it like Armada, and when I heard of the king who slew seven, it reminded me of our little ships opposed to the Spanish ships of war in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; and I thought it would help me to remember it. Imagine my disappointment when I discovered that it was pronounced "Am-a-da." On the inner temple wall before the Hall of the Priests, there are some later very insignificant scratchings. You could not dignify them by the word engraving, and among them is one of a camel and a donkey, very quaint-looking—interesting because they may have been scratched there much later when Arab hordes overran the desert world, and it has been thought that at one time this temple was used by the Mohammedans as a mosque. The sand had claimed

it for its own and it lay buried until fairly recently it sprang once more to life. Just beneath it in the sand, the excavators discovered remains of a smaller and older temple, facing the river, which had been built by the indomitable Queen Hatshepsut. I wondered if it had been for her Vizier and soldiers who had gone on that expedition to Punt, when they returned bringing ivory, apes, gold and silver and spices which are pictured on the walls of her terraced temple at Thebes.

Although I started this letter to you, Aunt Lizzie, I think there is something which will interest the soldier, sailor, historian, antiquarian, and the animal lover.

After seeing Amada we went on board again and sailed lazily up the Nile towards Abou Simbel. We had seen in one of these temples a relief, showing the god of the Nile with foot upraised as if releasing the flood-gates of the river for the yearly inundation. Nowadays, it seems that the Egyptian Government, aided by British engineers, have made themselves the gods of the inundation, for the storage of water in the Upper Nile is so affecting the land that known landmarks are disappearing week by week. But although houses are falling, temples are being submerged, palm trees are showing only their fronded heads above the water, the four figures of Rameses the Great which are sitting outside the temple of Abou Simbel remain there serene and unafraid.

We laid up close to the river bank, the gangway was thrown ashore. The sight of Cook's steamer coming up the river and the sound of its siren was the signal for all the villagers and children and dogs to appear, eager for baksheesh, the dogs eager for their bi-weekly meal. Big, lean dogs they were, who waited patiently, knowing that for them a good time was coming. It was a curious crowd that waited for us. Little boys of all ages, dressed in the usual long blue gowns, some with little round coloured caps on their heads, others with bare woolly heads, which looked most comical when their owners buried themselves in the golden sand, leaving only their heads, which they wriggled incessantly, exposed to view. There were two small boys, twins, I imagine, as everything one did was an echo of the other, except that one of them possessed an "air" entirely his own. On the boat we nicknamed him "the Dandy," as he had one of these little caps I have mentioned perched most jauntily on his head and apparently regarded himself as "Beau Brummel" of Abou Simbel, although I wickedly called him "Winston," a name by which, he speedily became known.

That night, Bakry, the new dragoman on the *Thebes*, who had taken the place of Boulos, asked how many wished to be called early to see the sunrise. Practically everyone said "Yes," and soon after six o'clock everyone was outside the Great Temple. The correct thing is, I believe, to

go inside and watch the sun's rays strike one of the tall figures of Rameses as Osiris, which stand erect on either side of the aisle leading up to the holy of holies. At different times in the year the sun rays touch a different face. Most of the people obeyed the dragoman's call, but we who had seen the marvel outside the temple twice before preferred to wait for it. And so three of us waited in silence ; a rosy hue heralded the sunrise, first touched the rocky face of the temple, then dropped like a glowing veil over the seated figures of the waiting kings who for more than three thousand years had morning by morning greeted Ra Harmachis as he appeared first over the desert hills across the shining river. We stood "unsunned," and then the age-long miracle happened ; spellbound we watched, wishing that we could, like Joshua, bid the sun stand still as he crossed the horizon. Soon the red glow became a burning gold, and then the Kings were no longer living beings but grand sandstone figures of Rameses II which had been carved out of this rock somewhere about 1500 B.C.

Have I made you see it and feel the grandeur of it ? Afterwards I turned to look inside the lofty but narrow portal of the temple. Daylight had won and the shadowy figures of the giant Kings were now to be seen in the sunlight. Very majestic and impressive they are, eight of them on either side, with folded arms holding the flail and sceptre

of Osiris, not swathed as mummies but as Kings of the Other World with one foot forward as if starting on a journey. Each face, representing the same man, seemed to show him in a different mood, although one lady to whom I was speaking disagreed and said that she thought each face represented Rameses at a different age. That is true art, I suppose, isn't it, to bid each beholder see the same picture, face, or statue from a different point of view?

These are my sunrise musings.

Later, on the same day, when we paid our official visit, everyone was present and obeyed the roll call. The mystery had gone, and we were just tourists visiting one of the Wonders of the World. On the walls, as you enter, on either side of the door, there are carved a long line of captives with a cord tied round each neck, roping them together, and hands bound behind them, being led into the presence of the King. Curly-headed negroes on one side, and hook-nosed Semites on the other. With the thought of the miserable captives in our minds we entered the Great Temple. I mention them now because it is only in daylight that they can be seen ; the reliefs or carvings inside, call them which you will, I shall reserve until I tell you of our evening visit. Now I am going to give you an idea of the temple with its treasure chambers, and its statues of gods in the holy of holies, for remember that several gods were

worshipped here—Ra Harmachis, or Harakte, the god of the dawn here in Nubia, Ptah of Memphis, the creator, Amen Ra of Thebes, the sun-god, and Rameses himself seated “among the gods” to receive worship and offerings. Now, if you can, try to picture a temple service long ago, when Rameses the Great came to worship here. First, remember that there are several small, long rooms on each side of the sanctuary, where the offerings brought by worshippers from different districts for the different gods were placed. All the walls of these rooms are carved with pictures of the King and the gods, and on each side are long benches with niches above, hewn out of the rock, for the offerings. The four gods are seated in the sanctuary, before them is the table of offerings.

The great bronze doors of the temple are swung back, the people are admitted into the outer court, the nobles into the second court, the priests into the hypostyle hall; all are waiting. The King and the High Priest enter, the High Priest wearing four robes, two of red, a yellow one over the red, and a thin white one, perhaps the origin of our priests' surplices, over the other three. Slowly they proceed up through the temple courts and hall, bearing the offering of incense, after having purified themselves. The censer is a bronze pan at the end of a long arm, on which is the box to hold the pellets of resin. In the pan is placed a heated saucer of pottery, with live charcoal on

which resin is placed to burn. There are a series of actions, each performed with a long speech, some aloud, some whispered. The incense rises from the censer, sanctifying the outer holy place, then the priest opens the bronze doors which hide the holy of holies from the gaze of men, and salutes the god with deep obeisance and cries of "Hail!" Hymns are chanted, sand is sprinkled on the floor, water is sprinkled over the statue, which is then clothed with sacred robes and anointed with holy oil. Food is spread before the god, and then the small image of him is placed in a shrine and carried on the shoulders of the priests round the temple precincts. Sometimes the shrine is placed in a golden barque and brought up the river, as from Karnak to Luxor, and back again. At temples dedicated to one god these festal services took place only once a year, the services on other days being held in one of the side chapels. I imagine that as there were four gods worshipped at Abou Simbel there were four special holy days.

After trying to think back and to visualise happenings of long ago, we came out of the sun-lighted darkness and walked across the golden sand to the temple of Hathor, the Goddess of joy and love which Rameses had hewn out of the ~~rock~~ in honour of his favourite wife, the beautiful Nefertiti. The façade of the temple has figures of Rameses and Nefertiti carved out of the rock, with some of their children on either side of them.

Inside there are square rock-hewn pillars, the capitals formed by the curve of the sistrum, within which the face of Hathor, the goddess, who is represented with the ears of a cow, is carved.

We were shown a carving of the pig-headed god Set. I wondered why he was represented here, because Set usually means something sinister. Woman-like, I imagined that Nefertiti had awakened jealousy in the hearts of one of Rameses' many wives, and that the black god had been put there as a reminder that happiness, joy and love are victorious against all clouds and darkness. It is quite a small temple, but suggestive of a great and warlike king's love for his little queen. Probably dry old records and learned men's books will prove me wrong, but I do like to think that there was a gentler side to Rameses' character which Nefertiti helped to mould, that sometimes the hard warrior relaxed and became a lover, and that those moments are chronicled in rock in this temple, at one time hidden by the shifting sand.

Do you realise that you have paid two visits to Abou Simbel, one at the mysterious hour of dawn, when I wanted you to enjoy its beauty as I did ; one in the bright sunlight, when I wanted you to enjoy its religious significance? Now I want you to read with me some history as carved upon its walls—" Fightings and fears within, without "—exactly expresses it, for wretched captives are dragged along roped by the neck, grasped by the



Reliefs at the Entrance to the

hair of their head, thrown headlong into the river—clubbed—shot with arrows, so that fear and death is their portion ; while the great Rameses strides along like a Colossus dealing terror, death and destruction all around.

There is the well-known story made famous throughout the ages by the poet Pentaur, who described or sang the saga of the fight when Rameses was left alone through the treachery of spies. How he had to hack his way to safety. On these walls it is all told, even to the expression on the faces of the captured spies, whose one ambition appears to be to make a speedy end of dying. The scenes on the walls of this great court are all of war ; but in the sanctuary the warrior becomes the suppliant, and you see Rameses making offerings before the gods ; and then by a final soaring of ambition the warrior is forgotten, the suppliant no longer prays, and you find him seated in majesty among the gods. No wonder that the giant statues of him as Osiris in the outer hall are in the act of marching, and not swathed as mummies ; Abou Simbel represents the apotheosis of Rameses as he himself wills it. . . .

I was one of the few energetic members of the party one morning. It was a brilliantly hot day, and the programme was a walk up to the top of Kasr Ibrahim, to see a ruined Roman fortress, the stones of which had been carried from a temple at the foot of the hill, built by the Egyptians a

thousand years or more before Rome conquered the land of the sun-god. Within the fortress, the Copts at a later date had built a Christian church, later still the Moslems a mosque. All, all is ruined now, but we were able to look down on the Nile, fringed by palm trees, and the deep gold desert, as Egyptians, Romans, Copts and Moslems had looked down during three thousand years.

Always on the look-out for odds and ends I noticed curious grooves in the sandstone blocks and asked the dragoman what they were. He gave me one explanation, and I read another in some book ; one is more picturesque than the other, so take which you will. Either that they are marks left by ancient builders who used to sharpen their tools on the blocks, or that they have been caused by the natives rubbing the sand away in order to get a powder with which to anoint the head or the eyes of the sick, believing that sand or dust from a holy place has a peculiar efficacy.

Now, if any of you have read the pamphlets or leaflets issued, giving a programme of the things seen on this Upper Nile trip, you will notice one name so far unmentioned by me except in speaking of our black boy, and will promptly say : " There, we have caught her out. She gave one of the temples a miss."

You're wrong, my dears, I did not, but darkness came over my mind and I forgot it. I am

not mixing metaphors, but am speaking sober truth.

Imagine what you feel like when, toiling up a hill of golden sand on a brilliant sunny morning, you enter into the darkness of night.

Gerf Hussein, or, as the Egyptians once called it, "The House of Ptah," is a little temple hewn out of the living rock.

In each of the side aisles there are four recesses where sit three figures, the central one of the Trinity is always Rameses, the two on either side of him, being those of the various gods under whose tutelage he was at the time of the dedication of the temple. The amazing thing is that the whole temple and each several figure is blackened, painted carefully over by the early Christians, in the endeavour to blot out the brilliance and light-heartedness of the old Egyptian worship. The whole effect was gruesome and uncanny. Try and picture first a square rock-hewn building with two figures of Rameses as Osiris, like grim, black sentinels, silently standing on either side of the way to the holy of holies, with black figures seated in the shadowy darkness behind them, and in the sanctuary itself, ghostly images robed in night.

That is what Gerf Hussein looks like in the twentieth century, and what it has looked like for some one thousand five hundred years, but when the world was young the sanctuary spoke of life

and light and love. We, too, came out of the shadows on to the golden banks of the silver Nile, and drinking in the sweetness of the morning air repeated to ourselves the old saying: "He who drinks of the waters of the Nile will return to drink again."

Shall I confess that when I read your letters telling of the fogs, the cold and the darkness in England I revelled in that other proverb: "He who drinks of the waters of the Nile will forget his native land," but, however, I did have the grace to whisper under my breath "*pro tempore*."

This is a temple letter. Between Assouan and Wady Halfa we shall have seen five temples, whereas last year we saw eight, for Derr, Dendur and Kalabsha were included. Derr is the rock-hewn temple of Rameses, where you can see him with his tame lion. It lies right at the back of that town, which was formerly the capital of Nubia. Now the capital is a newly built place, looking rather like a modern suburb, on the opposite side of the Nile. Dendur is a beautiful tiny temple of Ptolemaic days. Its two tall columns with lotus-flower heads are now like the flowers themselves, floating on the top of the water. What I remember specially about this little temple is, that last year when we walked through it, we were shown in a doorway a stone inscribed with a writing which confounds the wit of the world, and no one to this day has been able to translate it. I remember



Beit al Wali, Upper Nile

standing on a baking hot day at Knossus before another stone, and being told that it, too, tells of a language which no man knoweth.

So much for Derr, so much for Dendur. Kalabsha, too, beautiful as a garden with flower, fruit and tree capitals, is now practically submerged. Beauty flooded by Utility! However, Beit al Wali, "The Home of the Saint," a little temple carved out of the living rock can still be seen, and it is well worth a visit.

The boat is moored close to the shore. Mud houses are built right down to the water's edge. Curious houses they are, with mud-walled courts before them, and built into the walls of the little houses, saucers and plates of very ordinary china.

Last year there was a wedding the day we landed, and the whole of one of the small courts before the bride's house was packed with women, gaily dressed in bright colours, with gold coins hanging down over their brows, and silver nose-rings, earrings, and necklets on, all apparently come to visit the bride, but the arrival of the boat was too much for them. The bride was forgotten and they all turned and watched us disembarking. All sorts of weird oddments were presented for our inspection and purchase—necklaces, silver nose-rings, and also small round silver plaques which the women and children in particular wear in order to keep off "the evil eye." £1, £2, £3 they wanted for them, although two, I believe, did

sell theirs for 10s. just as the boat was leaving. We went on our way to the temple, besieged by black curly-headed children ; women, some very, very old, held out scraggy arms and hands with these silver ornaments for sale, others sat beside the path and spun cotton with quaint hand-loom, while turbaned and capped men (no red tarbooshes up here) had on their arms strings upon strings of necklaces for sale, which it is said, came not long ago from Czechoslovakia.

In the forecourt of the temple there is a series of carvings on either side, most interesting because so realistic of the life and belief of the people. There are "the people" coming to behold the great spectacle of the treasures, the captives, the strange animals, which have been taken on the King's latest campaign ; a giraffe, a hippopotamus, an elephant. One of the eager watchers has apparently got a touch of the sun, for you see his friends carry him and place him under the shade of the Dom palm. The fruit of it, mixed with two other properties, which, of course, I have forgotten, is said to have certain medicinal qualities. Natives looking at this old carving to-day will shake their heads, saying : " Yes. That is the thing to do with the sick." There is another relief showing a woman carrying her child in a basket to see the procession, just as you see them do to-day. To-day and Yesterday—a matter of three thousand years mean little in this old land of Egypt !

Inside the temple, the colouring is still quite bright, particularly two colours, pale blue and chocolate, as if the blue sky and the deep brown hills outside had intensified the colouring within. Here the columns are grooved—Proto-Doric I believe the learned call them. Nefertiti and Rameses are among the gods again, and I found one I was not acquainted with, sitting behind Horus, and was told that he was in charge of the sacred books—in other words, we should call him the librarian of the god. We had seen the room at Abou Simbel where the books were kept, but this was the first time I had seen a representation of him who had charge of them. I imagine he was supposed to be the guardian spirit of the books. He was evidently a good spirit. I wondered what sort of guardian spirits watched over some of the books written and printed to-day !

One other thought I got out of Beit al Wali—"Home of the Saint"—so called, I imagine, because a holy man had some time lived there, long after the days of the Pharaohs. In some of the carvings the King is shown offering to various deities two little bowls which contained milk and honey. The twin offerings naturally bade me think of the land flowing with milk and honey which God promised to give His people after years of wandering in the wilderness, when they had left the flesh-pots of Egypt long behind. I wondered if

the freed Israelites, hearing the promise, remembered these carvings which they may have seen when labouring in slavery, for we know that they remembered the worship of Hathor when they besought Aaron to make them a god "and there came out this calf."

And so, not, as Pepys says, "to bed," but through the Gates of Kalabsha to Shellal.

Love from the "Temple Hound" to a "Temple Lover."

Fare ye well—all of ye.

EPILOGUE

The day is done. The sun sets in a rainbow of brilliance, orange and red, blue and green. The golden summit of the Great Pyramid pierces the bright sky.

The eastern horizon changes swiftly from deep pink to violet and then to darkest blue.

The Sphinx, the ever-watchful guardian, rests under a starlit heaven in which a silver radiance is born, as the moon slowly rising, touches the inscrutable face with gentle fingers.

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